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AFRICAN FAMILIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Edited by
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African Families in a Global Context

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Contents

Preface 5

Author presentations 7

Introduction
Globalization, Africa, and African Family Pattern 9
Göran Therborn

1. African Families in a Global Context 17
Göran Therborn

2. Demographic Innovation and Nutritional Catastrophe: Change, Lack of Change and Difference in Ghanaian Family Systems 49
Christine Oppong

3. Female (In)dependence and Male Dominance in Contemporary Nigerian Families 79
Bola Udegbe

4. Globalization and Family Patterns: A View from South Africa 98
Susan C. Ziehl

Preface

In the mid-1990s the Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research (Forskningsrådsnämnden – FRN) – subsequently merged into the Council of Science (Vetenskaprådet) – established a national, interdisciplinary research committee on Global Processes. The Committee has been strongly committed to a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach to globalization and global processes and to using regional perspectives. Several collective studies have come out of its work: *Globalizations and Modernities. Experiences and Perspectives of Europe and Latin America* (1999), *Globalization and Its Impact on Chinese and Swedish Society* (2000), *The New Federalism* (2000), all published by FRN in Stockholm (in English), and *Globalizations Are Plural*, a special issue of *International Sociology* (Vol. 15, No. 2, 2000). Selected papers from the conference on Asia and Europe in Global Processes, held in Singapore in March 2001, will appear in Göran Therborn and Habibul Haque Khondkar (eds), *Asia and Europe in Globalization: Continents, Regions and Nations*, published by E.J. Brill, Leiden. The present volume completes the regional perspective.

The chapters in this report derive from a conference at the iKhaya Guest Lodge and Conference Centre in Cape Town, 29 November–2 December 2001, organized together with the University of Cape Town. A companion volume, also published by the Nordic Africa Institute, deals with economic issues (*Globalization and the Southern African Economies*, edited by Mats Lundahl).

Uppsala, December 2004

Göran Therborn

Author Presentations

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Introduction: Globalization, Africa, and African Family Patterns

Göran Therborn

Family relations have a small-scale, local intimacy, which is often placed in contrast, positively or negatively, to the Big World and its economics and politics. However, family, sexual, and gender relations are also, and increasingly, affected by global processes. By waves of birth control and family planning, by international gender discourse, sustained by trans-national organizations and movements, by the spread of contraceptives and of sexual models. By trans-national economic developments and crises, by international political pressures, by the spread of epidemics, like HIV/Aids. Here we are therefore looking at African families in an explicit global framework.

Globalization is a buzzword that is being used under all conceivable circumstances. We are living in an 'era of globalization', where the four corners of the world have come together, where commodity and factor markets are strongly interlinked, where technologies spread from more advanced to less advanced regions, where information travels virtually instantaneously, where financial capital moves in milliseconds, where economic policies in different countries tend to be more and more entangled with each other, where political systems spread, mainly from the western democracies to other parts of the world, where different cultures borrow elements from each other and fuse them, where legal systems clash and influence one another, where traditional family and gender patterns are broken up as a result of foreign influences, where religions confront each other, and so on.

There is virtually no end to the list, and it is difficult to resist global influences. Nostalgic romantics do it, and incite others to join them, pretty much like the primitive rebels of Eric Hobsbawm, and governments like that of North Korea, with its single, preset radio channel, which manage to block the flow of information from the outside, but for how long? Even the dark side of globalization, international terrorism, rides the crest of the wave and makes liberal use of the technologies that have contributed to shrinking the world. The tide is irresistible, and whatever ideological views you hold, it cannot be met in an ostrich-like fashion, but you must tackle the problems it creates (and make use of the promises it makes) in a head-on conscious fashion.

The actors in this globalized setting are as many as the forms that globalization assumes: firms, workers, farmers, international organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the many different specialized agencies of the United Nations system, international non-goven-

mental organizations, churches, consumers of information spread via more or less global mass media, music listeners, art viewers, book readers, internet users … Again, there is no end to their number.

A problem with this variety of forms and actors is that it is not at all clear what globalization means, or rather, it means very different things to different people. It all depends on the particular setting and circumstances. Globalization is not globalization, but globalizations, and globalizations are plural, not singular. They are economic, cultural, social, cognitive, normative, political; you name it. Once again, the diversity is overwhelming.

A second problem with the globalization concept is that very frequently, globalization is implicitly thought of as a state: the current state of the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This, however, is a misconception. Globalization is not a state; it is a process. It is the process that created the globalized world, and this process cannot be understood, except in a historical perspective. We need to come to grips with the very mechanisms that brought us to where we are today. In the present work we will define globalization, or globalizations (the two terms will be used interchangeably) as the processes creating tendencies to a world-wide reach, impact and connectedness of social phenomena in a wide sense and a world-encompassing awareness among social actors.

Globalization in History

With this perspective it is possible to identify a number of major globalization waves or episodes across the history of mankind. The first consisted of the diffusion of world religions and the establishment of civilizations covering major parts of the continents. The main period extended from the fourth to the eighth centuries AD. This was the period when Christianity gained a strong foothold in the European continent and established outposts in Africa and India. Simultaneously, the other world religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, expanded out of their core areas, across continents and from one continent to another. Confucianism spread across China and neighboring territories. All these religions had their own, unifying, holy languages and were carriers of specific cultures.

The second wave of globalization consisted of the creation of the most wide-ranging continuous empire that the world has ever seen – all the way up to the present day: the Mongol empire. Out of incredibly small and volatile beginnings, a people consisting of perhaps a million souls at the beginning of the thirteenth century managed to wreak major havoc on all the major civilizations surrounding it and govern a territory that extended from Eastern Europe to the Sea of Japan, and from the Indo-Chinese border and the Persian Gulf to southern Siberia and the northern parts of European Russia. For the first time in history Europe acquired reliable knowledge about China and the Orient. Two continents were brought closer

together. The Mongol episode also served to solidify some of the long-distance trade network that was established from about 1250 to around 1350, linking the British Isles in the west with China and Indonesia, and with parts of Africa south of the Sahara.

Shortly after the fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China, the Chinese undertook a series of major voyages that brought them to the east coast of Africa, and had it not been for a sudden inward turn in imperial policy they might well have discovered the sea route to Europe. Instead, the protagonist role in the third wave of globalization, that of the geographical discoveries and territorial conquests, fell to the Europeans, notably the two Iberian kingdoms of Portugal and Spain during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the Dutch, British and French thereafter, up to around 1750. Asia was linked closer to Europe, and the Americas made their entry in the global arena. Thereafter, the European wars were fought not only on the European continent but on the land and in the waters of overseas territories as well. War had acquired a global character.

At this point, a major break with the past took place in world history: the industrial revolution. This first led to increased globalization of commerce, via the triangular trade pattern that saw European manufactures flowing to North America and Africa, African slaves supplying the American plantations, and North American raw materials going into the industrial production of Europe. The industrial revolution also constituted the prerequisite for the fourth major globalization episode: the gradual diffusion of the new technology across the European continent, eastwards to Russia, and to post-Meiji Japan, as well as the creation of the 'north-south' type of trade pattern that was to culminate in the golden age of transport revolution, commodity trade, labor migration and capital movements from about 1870 to the outbreak of World War I. During this period European manufactures were regularly exchanged for primary products from the regions of recent settlement and less developed regions elsewhere in America, Africa and Asia. China and Japan were opened up by force to international trade. This period also saw the culmination of the territorial competition between the major European colonial powers, with the division of Africa. The First World War and the Great Depression provided the end point of this globalization wave, and a retreat from global patterns.

The fifth wave of globalization began with World War II, which was a great deal more global than World War I, involving major war theaters not only in Europe but in North Africa, Asia east of India, and the Pacific as well. One of the major results of the war was the gradual dissolution of the colonial empires, with the exception of the Soviet Union. Another was the regrouping of the major powers that resulted in the Cold War, involving all parts of planet Earth.

The collapse of the Soviet Union may perhaps be put as the symbolic starting point of the sixth, hitherto unfinished, globalization episode, but some of the major mechanisms had evolved gradually during the late 1970s and the 1980s. Interna-

tional trade expanded, capital movements were increasingly freed of obstacles, the European and North American economies were linked closer to one another, not only in terms of commodity and factor movements, spread of technology and transnationalization of firms, but also in terms of policy interdependence, mainly economically, but to an increasing extent also politically. The former communist states have been drawn into the western orbit. The internationalization of the means of telecommunication and the mass media has been little short of revolutionary. All these tendencies have grown stronger on the one hand, and have spread across an ever vaster geographic territory on the other.

The Place of Africa

The present volume deals with Africa and the place of the African continent and states in global processes, from the special angle of family relations. Africa does not figure prominently in any of the globalization waves or episodes that we have just summarized. It was touched by the early spread of the world religions, but only at the margins of Christianity and Islam, although the Christian connection once played a part in Portuguese-Congolese relations. The increasing knowledge of Africa did not basically change the Ptolemaic geography of the world.

The slave trade and the later exchange of manufactures for primary products was limited to coastal areas as well, and the territorial division of the continent among the colonial powers constitutes the last act in the drama of western European imperialist expansion. The post World War II period in a sense marked a retreat of Africa from global processes as the political and economic ties with the European powers were severed, and in the surge of globalization that has taken place during the last few decades, Africa has been increasingly marginalized.

The marginal position of Africa does, however, not mean that a study of the continent from the point of view of globalization and global processes is unwarranted. Globalization has definitely had an impact on Africa, and the purpose of the present volume is to contribute to the understanding of how global processes are interpreted in and affect Africa, but not only that. Africa has also made contributions to global processes, and in that sense it would be wrong to view the continent as the child of sorrow of contemporary Modernity. It should be analyzed not only as a recipient or a victim, but also in its role as an active contributor, without letting any ideological, diplomatic or politically correct blinkers limit the view.

The idea is to find out how global flows and entanglements affect African societies. That is, how family and gender relations are affected by global economic and cultural processes and by discourses and demands for change voiced, for example, via the UN system and the apparatus of international development cooperation as a whole. How the mixture of domestic traditions, colonialism, the global Cold War, and the discourses on national identity, self-reliance and human and political rights

in the African political and legal systems have all left their deposits and created the current situation.

In addition, we need to pinpoint some of the specific African contributions to the global processes that have been unfolding in the recent past; the final discrediting and fall of colonial rule, the peaceful deracialization and democratization of the most influential country in Africa south of the Sahara – South Africa – preconditions, experiences of the process, conclusions and prospects, as well as the intra-African solutions to issues posed by pressures for globalization.

Family, Sex, and Gender Relations

Africa has a particular set of family systems which is of special interest in a global perspective. Strong patriarchal traditions, albeit with relative sexual permissiveness, large-scale polygamy, institutionalized age cohorts, major cultural weight given to fertility and lineage, and pervasive politico-economic, social and cultural patterning through kinship are some of the most salient features of the African family institution. To what extent and in which manner have African family and gender patterns been affected by global or transnational processes?

In Chapter 1, Göran Therborn, puts the African family into a global historical context of fertility, patriarchy and what he calls the sex-marriage complex. His point of departure is the dramatic world-wide changes in family systems that took place during he second half of the twentieth century, a reduction in fertility, an erosion of patriarchy and a secularization of sexuality. The chapter deals with the adaptations of the African family systems that have taken place in relation to these trends. It also tries to map the African variations of marriage and sexuality.

One of the salient characteristics of African family systems is the strong emphasis they place on fertility. The African continent has, however, not escaped the general reduction of fertility, although the decline set in comparatively late Kenya took the lead in family planning matters, but without much to show for it. Instead the first major reduction took place in southern Africa, in Zimbabwe and Botswana. The erosion of patriarchy in Africa has gone hand in hand with urbanization, industrialization, the development of wage labor and the reduction of the importance of land and cattle in the economy. The power of the fathers has been challenged because it is no longer needed in the context of modernization, although it would be wrong to say that in terms of parent-child relations patriarchy does not continue to be a main characteristic of Africa. Male supremacy over women has been eroded to some extent but by and large still remains strong. A traditional institution that has survived is the extended family, because it fulfils a security function. Another traditional and enduring characteristic of African family unions is the asymmetry in sexual relations, notably polygyny (the highest incidence in the world) and concubinage. Marriage in Africa is virtually universal, but formal unions tend to be

more unstable in some parts of Africa than elsewhere. However, as elsewhere, the age of (the first) marriage appears to have been delayed, and possibly the incidence of informal unions is on the rise. The sexual revolution also reached Africa very early: some time in the early 1980s, if not before, but the ensuing new sexual order in Africa is very different from that of Western Europe and North America.

Therborn's chapter is followed by two African case studies. The first of these, in Chapter 2, by Christine Oppong, a British-Ghanaian anthropologist of Accra and Cambridge, deals with Ghana. Oppong focuses on changes in the patterns of biological and social reproduction related to rapid globalization, notably demographic and economic changes at the national level. Demographic data reveal an increasing extent of malnutrition among both mothers and children, even among the better-off households, with the exception of households making use of modern contraceptive devices. Oppong points to the negative influences of structural adjustment policies on employment, wage rates and living standards. The economy of Ghana deteriorated during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Retrenchment took place in the state sector and the private sector displayed few initiatives. The macroeconomic indicators were unfavorable, and poverty was widespread.

Responses to the deterioration took place on various levels. The extent of rural-urban migration increased, not only among males, but even more among females. In rural districts the female workload increased. Fertility rates began to decline dramatically as a result of delay of marriage and increased use of contraceptive devices, and abortion appears to be used to an increasing extent. A distressing fact is that the incidence of infant and toddler malnutrition and death is high and does not seem to be declining. Partly this is due to deficient feeding practices. For example, supplements to breast feeding are introduced too early. Absence of parents during critical stages also plays a certain role. Work patterns in the urban economy lead to a reduction in the amount and intensity of child care. Mothers are forced out of the house and into the wage labor market when their husbands fail to find employment. Thus, concludes Oppong, by distorting traditional gender roles, globalization has had a negative impact on infant care in Ghana, and this fact also explains the lack of correlation between socio-economic status and infant malnutrition. Women to an increasing extent have to shoulder the bread-winner burden – frequently a physically demanding task – but at the same time the traditional kin support for child care has been undermined and the extent of conjugal support weakened which is not compensated for by the development of a modern social security system.

Chapter 3, by Bola Udegbe, a Nigerian psychologist of the University of Ibadan, examines gender relations in Nigeria under the impact of globalization. The focus is on the household level where the changes take place, and Udegbe examines marriage patterns, relations between husband and wife and income-generating activities. Some conclusions about gender relations are drawn from Nigerian proverbs. Finally

views about traditional gender roles are revealed. The material comes from three geographical areas: one in the north, another in the east and a third in the south.

Marital status (statutory, customary, Islamic and cohabitation) varies between the three regions, among other things depending on religion, education and geographic location (urban/rural). Husband/wife relations were defined in terms of the extent of discussion between the spouses of certain important family matters, like money, children's education, health, marriage of the children, and work problems. A clear pattern emerges. The women are more dependent on their husband's consent for decisions than vice versa. Both men and women are involved in income-generating activities, and it is only when it comes to secondary pursuits that males dominate. Male incomes in general were higher than those of their female counterparts. Men and women were also asked to cite a proverb on women, and here some significant differences emerged. Men deemed women to be untrustworthy, unable to keep secrets and take rational decisions, and not chaste and sexually trustworthy – an opinion that was not shared by females. Only in the Islamic north did the answers provided by women resemble those provided by their husbands. Finally, both men and women by and large thought that it was unacceptable that women perform traditionally male tasks and vice versa.

The conclusions are clear. Only when it comes to income-generating activities does something resembling gender equality exist in Nigeria. Otherwise patriarchy remains strong. The road to increased equality also appears to go via increased involvement of women in the economy This tends to improve both gender attitudes and the economic well-being of the family.

The final chapter, by Susan Ziehl, a South African sociologist at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, examines the relationship between globalization and family patterns in the North (Europe) as viewed from the South (South Africa). After a review of some of the literature on globalization, family change and diversity Ziehl turns to the question whether the conventional nuclear family is dying in Britain, and refutes the thesis as not being borne out by the available evidence. The increased ethnic diversity in Britain, on the other hand, has had an impact on family patterns, but mainly those of the immigrants, which have moved closer to the European ones. The impact on family patterns as a whole has been very limited, due to the low overall percentage of immigrants in the British population. Thus, concludes Ziehl, the traditional family pattern still dominates in Britain. This is, however, frequently not the picture conveyed by media and sociologists. How come? Ziehl finds the answer, as far as her fellow sociologists are concerned, in a confusion of normative and positive issues. The desire to have an acceptance of non-conventional family patterns has led to wishful thinking about the empirical evidence.

Turning to the wider European context (the European Union), there is more diversity in family patterns. Extended, multi-generational families are present to a larger extent in southern Europe, where it is also less common that people live

alone. These families present an oscillation between extended and nuclear patterns as the older generation dies out and the youngest generation produces children. At the opposite end of the scale – a high prevalence of single-person households – the Scandinavian countries are found. Both these patterns have remained stable over time, i.e. globalization has had a limited impact only.

Finally, Ziehl discusses the thesis that a global convergence towards a nuclear family pattern is taking place. She looks at the South African evidence. Data for the society as a whole are not available, but census figures relating to African households may indicate that urbanization goes hand in hand with a transition from extended to nuclear family structures. If this is true, however, the process has not yet advanced to the point where the nuclear family dominates the national scene, and the contrast with Britain is clear indeed. Thus, overall, family diversity continues to persist and whether the present wave of globalization will imply any change in this respect remains to be seen.

The chapters are all revised and updated versions of papers presented at a December 2001 Cape Town workshop of the Swedish inter-university research committee on global processes. The post-production work – as film-makers call it – as well as the actual workshop was organized by my development economist friend and colleague Mats Lundahl, at the Stockholm School of Economics, who is editing a parallel economic volume. I will take this opportunity to thank him publicly for his decisive contributions, to this volume as well as to the workshop.

1. African Families in a Global Context

Göran Therborn

Introduction

My interest in African family systems is part of a work on the family institution in the world in the course of the 20th century, *Between Sex and Power*, *the Family in the World 1900–2000* (Therborn 2004). This paper is an attempt to locate the African family in today's global context, the first two thirds of the twentieth century are only hinted at here.

The second half of the 20th century has experienced the most dramatic family changes in known history, measured on a world scale. But the recent historical processes of change have affected the different family systems at different points in time, in different ways, and with differing outcomes.

What has happened to the family in the world during the twentieth century may be summed up in three short points. Firstly, families produce far fewer children, in several cases fewer than women or couples want. Three centuries of rapid population growth, 1750–2050, are drawing to a close, after a peak in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

Secondly, ancient patriarchy, the power of fathers and husbands, has been eroded. This, general but very uneven, transformation of generation and gender relations is the most novel and far-reaching of the changes.

Thirdly, sexuality has been secularized, largely freed from religious taboos, and its links to family formation/family alliance have been loosened. Marriage, the institutional complex of socially ordered sexuality, has shrunk as a normative construction, although it retains a central place in human relationships all over the world. The space of pre-marital sexuality has widened.

None of these has had a linear unfolding, and only the world-wide decline of conceptions and births manifests any clear tendency of global convergence.

The African and Other Family Systems

The major contemporary family systems of the world are best seen as springing from combinations of religions/moral philosophies and territorially anchored, historically evolved customs and laws. In order to make a global analysis at all manageable, as analytical units these configurations have to be few in number, while allowing for large internal variation.

In this vein, we may distinguish a core of five major family systems, with at least two particularly noteworthy interstitial systems, and in each of the major systems important variants, which in turn can, and sometimes have to, be subdivided.

a) The Christian *European* family system, within which we shall have to deal with at least four variants, one Orthodox Eastern European, one North-Western Protestant, one Latin/Napoleonic Catholic Western, and one New World Protestant.

b) The Confucian *East Asian* family, of which the Chinese and the Japanese are the largest variants.

c) The (at its core) Hindu *South Asian* pattern, with a significant north-south divide, and also harbouring a Muslim variant.

d) The *Islamic* West Asian/North African family, with several sub-variants, mainly deriving from intra-Islamic divisions – Shiia-Sunni, and the four Sunni law schools – and more recently from different degrees of secular exposure.

e) The Sub-Saharan *African* set of family systems, characterized by a distinctive marriage and descent pattern in spite of religious pluralism and enormous ethnic diversity. At least from the angle of an interest in patriarchy, it appears meaningful first to distinguish two major polar variants of the African family, a West Coast sub-system of noticeable intra-marital female socio-economic autonomy and a sternly patriarchal South-Eastern one. In between we might place the matrilineal area of Central Africa, and, at the other pole, the Muslim savannah belt with a high degree of patriarchy. At the patriarchal outer fringe we have misogynous Muslim populations of the Horn, infibulating their women.

The two interstitial family systems of major importance are the following:

f) The (religiously pluralistic) *Southeast Asian* family pattern, stretching from Sri Lanka to the Philippines, and divisible into Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and in part even Confucian variants. Buddhist family insouciance and Malay customs have here come together in mellowing the normative rigidities of other Eurasian family norms.

g) The bifurcated *Creole* family systems coming out of the American socio-economic history of Christian European patriarchy running plantations, mines, and landed estates with African slave labour or Indian servile labour. Alongside the strict patriarchal, ruling high culture this has produced an informal Black, Mulatto, Mestizo, and (uprooted) Indian macho-cum-matrifocal family pattern.

The institutional core of the major family systems is usually approachable through canonical religious, ethical, and legal texts. However, as African religion and law are

not summed up in a canon of texts, nor in one oral sacred tradition, the institutionalization of the family in Africa is better understood from its outcomes, rather than from it sources.

In terms of classical social anthropology, the most characteristic aspects of the African family are probably its form of making marital alliances and of inheriting property. African marital alliances are formed by the groom's family giving wealth or services to the bride's family, and property is inherited from one generation to another as a rule only among members of the same sex. Both practices are largely absent from Eurasia, and have been related to African hoe agriculture largely worked by women, in contrast to Eurasian plough agriculture worked by men (Boserup 1970, Goody 1976). Nevertheless, inheritance rules are currently being changed and marriage or coupling is becoming increasingly fuzzy.

However changing, the family retains a particular centrality in African social life because of the weakness of other institutions and social clusters, of the state, of specific religious institutions among holders of African beliefs, of classes, castes, and nations. The African family system further includes:

A great respect for age, elders, and ancestors, including the considerable importance accorded to rites of passage into adulthood, and age groups as bases of rights and solidarity. Homage to ancestors is also a central part of the Confucian ethic, and a part of Hindu piety too, but nowhere other than in Africa does the boundary between the living and dead elders seem as blurred, and nowhere else is good communication with ancestors as crucial as in African tradition.

A strong evaluation of fertility, as a key human life goal, seemingly in a broader, more general sense than the classical Confucian emphasis on not breaking the ancestral line. Derived from this, a push towards universal marriage, but without necessarily giving much value to marriage as such, or weddings, and a widespread tendency to let fertility override legitimacy, alternatively to see legitimate descent in terms of lineage belonging, rather than as biological paternity.

Polygyny as a mass practice is also a unique feature of the African family, related to women's key role as agricultural labour as well as their mothering of children.

A strong collectivistic familism, traditionally dominating over individual choice, of marriage partner and of life course in general, widespread kinship rights and obligations, and exogamous marriage rules.

An absence of moral sexual asceticism, although contextualized sexual morality, extra-marital as well as pre-marital, differs widely.

An entrenched rule of male supremacy, which, however, may take many different forms. The actual occurrence of social combinations of male primacy and wide-ranging socio-economic female autonomy, particularly in the West Coast variant, made possible by weak conjugal bonds. However, African daughters constitute assets – attracting bridewealth – and not liabilities as in the East Asian perspective.

The aim of this chapter is not to compare family institutions, but to try to locate the African family system in relation to the dramatic changes of the world's family patterns. From the family system as such we should expect that the African family,

– has been reluctant and slow in decreasing its fertility,
– has allowed a considerable hollowing out of patriarchy inside a complex kinship pattern,
– has been part of the late 20th century sexual revolution, above all in urban areas.

The World's Demographic Transition, 1750–2050 – and Its Ending

By the end of the 20th century, in the whole of Europe only one small country, or perhaps two, was reproducing itself demographically, Protestant Iceland, and perhaps (recent data are lacking) Albania. The two most Catholic countries of the continent, Ireland and Poland, are practising birth control to the extent of having a fertility rate well below par, Polish fertility plunging to 1.3 children per woman in 2000.Within the European Union, mainstream Catholic countries, Italy, Portugal, Spain, have the lowest birth rate of all. Most European women have currently little more than one child, on the average. By the end of the twentieth century the "total fertility rate" (TFR), i.e., the number of children a woman can be expected to have during her fertile age, was 1.45 in the European Union, that is, less than one and a half children per woman, way below the reproduction rate (Eurostat 2001).

China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Thailand are also heading for a shrinking population, as are Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, Mauritius, Cuba, Trinidad/Tobago and possibly some other Caribbean islands. USA is just below the level of natural reproduction – with a TFR of 2.0 children per woman in 1997, US fertility kept up by Afro-American and Hispanic women (Hacker 2000).

In the long-view history of humankind, this secular decline of fertility is part of a longer and wider process, known among demographers as the "demographic transition". That is, a period of rapid population growth in a move, a "transition", from a low-growth (or periodically negative growth) system of high fertility and high mortality to another low-growth (or possibly declining) system of low fertility and low mortality. However, like most grand theories on the social world of humans, it has had considerable problems with the irregular varieties of human behaviour. As a theory of explanation and of prediction it has now been largely abandoned, while the concept itself still appears to make some sense as a broad descriptive trajectory of great historical significance. Its conception of a pre-transition stable equilibrium, though, is being increasingly questioned in favour of one made up of long-term cyclical swings.

If the current population trends, as estimated by the Population Division of the UN Secretariat, hold, we can date the demographic transition in the world as the three centuries between 1750 and 2050. Between 1500 and 1750 world population

grew at about 0.2% a year, at 0.25% between 1700 and 1750. Then a new demographic era began, in Europe, but helped to statistical visibility by a cyclical Asian upturn, and the growth rate climbed to 0.4 % annually for the second half of the eighteenth century.

During the 19th century the population of the earth grew by 0.5% a year. In spite of the world wars and other man-made disasters, the twentieth century saw the human population increase by 1.3 per cent annually. On a global scale, population growth peaked historically in the third quarter of the twentieth century, at a rate of almost two per cent a year. In the last quarter of the century it fell back to 1.6 %. UN predictions yield a growth rate for the first quarter of the 21st century of about 0.8% and for the second of 0.4. By 2025–2050 then, we should back at the 1750–1800 growth rate, with most probably prospects of stagnation or decline.[1]

Africa which till the mid-1990s had a smaller population than Europe may have one fifth of the planetary population in 2050, not far from three times as many as the whole of Europe (UN 1998:table 3).

Africa and the Different Processes of Fertility Decline

The African family system is so far well above reproductive level fertility, and the unique African desire for children was still prominent on the eve of the last quarter of the twentieth century.The special position of children in the African value system of the 1970s is underlined by the fact that the only other country with women wanting more children than the least natalist Black African country was Mauritania, a predominantly Arab-Berber country in the border region of North and Sub-Saharan Africa. As Sudan is also a border country (with a mean desire for 6.3 children), only one fully Arab-Muslim country had a desired fertility on a par with the lowest African countries (Ghana and Lesotho), Syria with a mean wish for 6.1 children. The fatalist abdication from any numerical wish, which yields a statistical understatement of the number of children desired, is also very much African and Yemenite. If we take away Yemen and the two Arab-African border countries, on the average only five per cent of the women of the five other Arab-Muslim countries had no idea of desired family size.

However, towards the very end of the last century, African fertility began to move downwards.

Usually, these figures are survey estimates, in several cases of shaky reliability. While individual decimals are best taken with some caution, and changes of a few decimals are best taken as probable measurement errors, there are certain patterns discernible. There are two distinctive national cases of strong fertility restriction, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Further, there are two broader regions of birth control.

1. The sources for the above global calculations are, for the pre-1950 world populations the estimates by J.N. Biraben (Livi-Bacci 1992:31); for 1950 and later, UN 1998: medium variant and 2000a:table 1.

Table 1. Desired number of children in family, Regions of the world, Mid- to late 1970s. Unweighted averages.

Regions	Mean	Range	Per Cent Giving No Number
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.3	8.3–6.0	19.1
Arab-Muslim World	5.1	8.7–4.1	14.7
South Asia	4.1	3.9–4.2	11.0
Andean America	4.3	5.1–3.8	0.6
Caribbean	4.2	4.7–3.8	0.2
Southeast Asia	4.1	4.4–3.7	1.7
East Asia (Korea)	3.2		1.0

Regions:
Sub-Saharan Africa: Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Senegal;
Arab-Muslim World: Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen;
South Asia: Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan;
Andean America: Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru;
Caribbean: Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela;
Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand.
Source: Re-calculations from UN (1987:table 29).

Table 2. African fertility developments 1970–1995/2000

TFR	1995–2000	Change since 1970	TFR	1995–2000	Change since 1970
Angola	6.8	+0.4	Lesotho	4.8	-1.0
Benin	5.8	-1.0	Liberia	6.3	-0.2
Botswana	4.4	-2.5	Malawi	6.8	-1.0
Burkina Faso	6.6	+0.2	Mali	6.6	+0.1
Burundi	6.3	-0.1	Mozambique	6.3	-0.4
Cameroon	5.3	-0.5	Namibia	4.9	-1.1
Central African Republic.	4.9	0	Niger	6.8	-0.3
Chad	6.1	+0.1	Nigeria	5.2	-1.7
Congo/Brazzaville.	6.1	+0.2	Rwanda	6.2	-1.6
Congo/Kinshasa	6.4	+0.4	Senegal	5.6	-0.9
Côte d'Ivoire	5.1	-2.3	Sierra Leone	6.1	-0.4
Equatorial Guinea	5.6	+0.6	Somalia	7.3	+0.6
Eritrea	5.7	….	South Africa	3.3	-2.4
Ethiopia	6.3	+0.5	Swaziland	4.7	-1.8
Gabon	5.4	+1.1	Tanzania	5.5	-0.9
Gambia	5.2	-1.3	Togo	6.1	-0.5
Ghana	5.2	-1.5	Uganda	7.1	0
Guinea	5.5	-0.7	Zambia	5.6	-1.1
Guinea Bissau	5.8	-0.1	Zimbabwe	3.8	-4.1
Kenya	4.5	-3.5			

Sources: 1995–2000: UN (2000b:table 2b); Angola and Guinea: World Bank (1979:table 18), referring to "1977", which should probably not be taken as one unique year, given the dependence on infrequent surveys and estimates; 1970 all others: World Bank (1992:national tables).

Southern Africa as a whole is one, beginning in the 1960s among the Blacks of South Africa, who by the late 1980s had the lowest fertility rate in Black Africa, 4.6 (Caldwell and Caldwell 1993:236), as against 5.1–5.2 in Zimbabwe and Gabon (World Bank 1992). The second region of decreasing birth rates is the West Coast, from Nigeria to Senegal, with a couple of exceptions, and of lacunae of recent knowledge, a process starting in Nigeria and Ghana in the second half of the 1980s, reaching the Francophone states in the 1990s.

The rise of births in Gabon is no statistical artefact, but a modern recuperation in a 20th century low fecundity/high sterility Equatorial area, running from Northern Cameroon into Angola, including the Congos and the Central African Republic (Brass et al. 1968:67ff, 177–8, 346–7).

Three regions still maintain high fertility, the most agrarian, the least proletarianized, the Sahel, the Lacustrine region in the East, and the Horn.

To get a grip on what has happened recently, we have to take note of the fact, that the African family has at last been drawn into a global political process, which started in the 1950s, trans-national family planning, birth control, population policy. Let us first draw the general framework of this global pursuit and its relationship to the historical decline of fertility.

Birth Control: Against the State, and for the State

We might sum up the long, winding, and complex world history of mass fertility decline by highlighting three sets of variables in the process: time, family system, and state-society relations.

The role of the state and the character of the family system constitute the major divides between the two historical intercontinental waves of birth control. The family system has been a crucial variable in both waves, but always operating in specific historical socio-political settings. The sense of personal mastery, crucial to decision-making about birth control, drew upon two major historical sources. A collective, and individualized modernism was one, bred from high class awareness, from social revolution, from mass modernist movements, or from mass media. A state-induced civic opportunity-cum-obligation was the other, deriving from new economic developmentalist doctrines and, in some cases, from preoccupations with very high density of population.

Africa and Global Family Planning

Kenya is the India of Black Africa in terms of family planning, the governmental pioneer and for a long time cautious and frustrated. The idea was developed by an outgoing colonial civil servant and was adopted by one of the leading politicians of independent Kenya, Tom Mboya, Minister of Planning and Development, and launched as a policy programme in 1967, with considerable foreign assistance, from

Rockefeller's Population Council above all. President Kenyatta refrained from committing himself, and the whole program had a rather low domestic profile till the mid-1980s, under the Moi Presidency. No visible effects were discovered till the census of 1989 (Ajaji and Kekovole 1998:113–56). Husbands, and males generally were long hostile to birth control. One district study in the early 1970s found that most of the women who dropped out of the family planning program did so because of opposition from clan or lineage elders (Odhiambo 1995:187). The dramatic size of the decline of the fertility rate, from 7.7 in 1984 to 6.7 in 1989, from survey data, has been criticized for sampling bias (Jensen 1996:100), but the trend, upward since Independence like in India, had definitely turned at last.

Table 3. World routes of fertility decline

First Wave (by 1930)

Process: Socio-cultural against the State

Family systems: Western European, European settler variant, Eastern European

Intermediate (1930–1950)

Process: First socio-cultural against the state, then with the state

Family system: Japanese variant of the East Asian

Early Second Wave (1960s)

Variant A. Process: State developmentalism with cultural support

Family systems: Economically relatively developed East Asian, economically developed Southeast Asian, North African Arab-Muslim, Turkish-Muslim

Variant B. Process: Socio-cultural movement with State support

Family system: Afro-Creole and Euro-Creole variants of the Creole family system

Mid-Second Wave (1970s)

Variant A. Process: Socio-cultural movement with State support

Family system: Iranian Muslim, Southern African

Variant B. Process: State developmentalism with socio-cultural resistance

Family system: South Asian Hindu

Variant C. Process: State developmentalism with socio-cultural support

Family system: Less economically developed East Asian and Southeast Asian,

Gulf states Arab-Muslim, developed Indo-Creole variant of the Creole family

Late Second Wave (1980s–)

Variant A. Process: State developmentalism with cultural resistance

Family system: Muslim South Asian, Kenyan African

Variant B. Process: Weak State push and cultural resistance

Family system: Poor Muslim, mostly African, poor Indo-Creole

The first major drop in sub-Saharan fertility occurred in Southern Africa and owed much more to wider spread education and health services, further helped by the separation of couples through extensive male labour migration, than to specific public programs of family planning. Zimbabwe and the more special cases of Botswana – diamond-rich, small population, very extensive labour migration – and the Black population of South Africa led the way in bringing about a very substantial fertility decline between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s (UNDP 1999:table Demographic Trends).

Anglo-Saxon birth control clinics had already been introduced during the colonial government of Rhodesia, and a developed network of pharmacies and health clinics provided contraceptives. The White minority government provided "field educators". By the late 1980s, about twice as many women in Zimbabwe as in Kenya were using contraceptives (Kokole 1994:83, Jensen 1996:102, cf. Scribner 1995:39). The Shona, the majority people of Zimbabwe, are very patriarchal (Jacobsson-Widding 2000, Meekers 1993), but a strong (mainly Protestant) Christian missionary tradition of schooling turned out to be more important. By 1960 at least half of all girls were enrolled in primary schooling, and after Independence in 1980 a major educational drive brought full enrolment in a few years. In the late 1980s a third of girls were in secondary education. The ZANU government also came to support family planning, like Botswana (Lestaeghe 1989:488, Scribner 1995).

Botswana had a parallel educational expansion, without equal in Black Africa. Kenya, for instance, which had a lead in primary education in 1980, stagnated afterwards. In 1990 the crucial secondary school enrolment in Kenya was less than half that of Zimbabwe and Botswana. In West Africa, the economic and political crises after 1980 led to a decline in school enrolment in the ensuing decade (Scribner 1995, table III:3).

Most of Africa is, of course, not at risk of being over-populated with regard to availability of land, and the Francophone and Francophile elites were long deaf to all talk of family planning, in concordance with the French natalist tradition, as well as with Catholic doctrine (Caldwell 1966:165ff, Kokole 1994:82). A couple of the more stable and modestly prosperous Francophone countries have also had special reasons for being uninterested. Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon have actually faced a scarcity of labour, and particularly the former is heavily dependent on foreign migrant labour.

At Arusha in Tanzania in 1984 African government representatives, preparing for the world conference on population in Bucharest, adopted a resolution, that "Governments should ensure the availability and accessibility of family planning services to all couples or individuals seeking such services free or at subsidized prices" (Chamie 1994:43). In 1989 Nigeria launched a rather vigorous policy of birth control "Four is enough!" and in the first half of the 1990s long reluctant gov-

ernments, like those of Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, began to promote contraception (International Planned Parenthood Federation 1999).

Neither politically nor economically have most Africans had much reason to feel a new sense of mastery after Independence. Children and kin have remained the most reliable source of security in a brutalized world, where the winning lots have been few. Slowly, however, toward the end of the century, education was increasing, media images of life-style options began to appear, and donor-aided governments supported fertility control.

The economic significance of family planning, i.e., the significance of the latter for issues of well-being or poverty, should not be underestimated. From 1991 to 1999 sub-Saharan African GDP per capita (measured by purchasing power) declined by six per cent. If the continent had had a South Asian trajectory, while keeping its own modest path of economic growth, per capita income would instead have increased by two per cent. With a Chinese population policy – hardly compatible with the African family system, true – African per capita income would have grown by nine per cent (calculations from UN 2000c:table A1).

Globally, the presence of children is a very variable feature of the human landscape. Around the turn of the millennium, children up to the age of fifteen made up almost half of the population of African countries, and forty per cent of Asian populations from Pakistan to Syria, a third of India, Mexico, and Brazil, a fourth of China and Korea, a fifth of North-Western Europe and USA, and a sixth of Central and Southern Europe (UN 2001a).

The Institutional Meltdown of Patriarchy

The power and the authority of fathers have melted down – if not disappeared – because their three major props have been seriously weakened, their *control of property, of space, and of culture.*

Massive proletarianization and salarization have made access to land and cattle irrelevant, or of marginal interest only, to a huge part of the human population. The development of new transport means and routes, with the opening up of New Worlds, and the rise of large cities all over the world, have provided escapes from paternal power. Thirdly, the tremendous and rapid growth of knowledge, with far-reaching practical technical applications, and of global power relations have seriously challenged the wisdom of fathers and ancestors. The acquisition of education and of "information" has overtaken the experience of age.

The same processes, which strengthened the status of sons and, with delays and qualifications, daughters, have also furthered the position of wives, again with delays and qualifications.

However, these transformations of property, space, and culture relations have not only been distributed unevenly, in extension, depth, and velocity, across the world. They have confronted different family systems, yielding different impacts.

How much they have affected sub-Saharan Africa is difficult to pin down with numerical precision. The non-agrarian labour force is distributed somewhere between the two poles provided by the UNDP (2001:table 24), Zimbabwe with three fourths of males and two thirds of women in industry and services, and Ethiopia with one tenth. De-agrarianization is thereby more advanced in Zimbabwe than in, say, Indonesia or Turkey – not to speak of Bangladesh and Pakistan – whereas the Ethiopian figure is almost as low as you can get.

Wage and salary workers comprise three fourths of the economically active population in South Africa, about two thirds in Botswana and Namibia, but are still a minority in sub-Saharan Africa north of its southern part, a third of the male labour force in Kenya, a fifth in Uganda, and less than a tenth in Benin and Ethiopia. In terms of proletarianization, Kenya is similar to Indonesia and Pakistan, while Uganda is well ahead of Bangladesh, which in turn is well above Ethiopia or Benin (UN 2000b:table 5E).

By the end of the 20th century urbanites comprised a third of the African population, about as much as in East Asia, somewhat more than in South Asia, if the World Bank (2001:table 2) is to be believed.

Literacy in sub-Saharan Africa is more widespread than in South Asia, mainly thanks to ex-British Africa. Youth literacy is equal to that of the Arab states, and somewhat less gender-divided. But poor East Asia is far more literate (UNDP 2001:table 23).

It is well known that Africa is poorer than the rest of the Third World, GDP per capita at purchasing power parities being about seventy per cent of that of South Asia (UNDP 2001:table 1). But the former is hardly behind the latter in the structural winds of change.

The African Family and Institutional Pressures

The traditional African family, in all its main variants, was strongly patriarchal, if historically not at all uniquely so. The backbone of African patriarchy was the power of elders in societies where age, as the basis of authority and solidarity, was more important than in the bulk of Eurasia and of conquered America. While there were variants of matrilineality – in which, however, power was often invested in the maternal uncle – and of significant female economic outlets from male patriarchy, the general tendency was one of male sexual superordination.

The colonial powers, on the whole, left the African family institution in legal peace. Without much success they did provide for Christian alternatives of "Ordi-

nance Marriages", as they were known in the British empire.[1] The French authorities tried to raise the marriage age, require bride consent, making marriage independent of bridewealth payment, and, like the Belgians, to ban polygamy. To little avail (Philips and Morris 1971). The main result of these colonial efforts was a complex legal pluralism, of colonial statutory law, a wide ethnic palette of "customary law", and Islamic, and, in East Africa for instance, Hindu law.

This complexity forms the background to attempts at national legal unification and reform after independence. As far as family law is concerned, this process seems to have had two major waves. One was soon after independence, geared to national unification and modernity, nationalistically inspired and imperially guided.

The other one surged in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, having a global source of inspiration, the UN Convention against All Discrimination of Women (launched in 1979), a global rights model, often working through global interactions with UN conferences, on family, on population, on women.

Of the first wave, the Ivory Coast Civil Code of 1964 is perhaps the best example (Levasseur 1976), flanked by Anglophone vanguard projects in Ghana and Kenya (Philips and Morris 1971, Law Faculty of the University of Ife 1964, Kuper and Kuper 1965). The second, much more powerful wave had its centre in Southern Africa, and in democratic South Africa (Eekelaar and Nhlapo 1998), although key countries in West and East Africa ratified the Convention earlier, in the mid-1980s (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal).

The Ivorian abolition of polygyny seems to have been written in water (Clignet 1970, Scribner 1995:30), and its Napoleonic matrimonial property regime would, if effective, reduce Ivorian female autonomy (Levasseur 1976:206–7). The Ghanaian and the Kenyan government bills already got stuck in the political process. There is clearly more clout in the recent Southern African egalitarianism, but the constitutional and legal thrust into ancient conservative customs and into generations of violent male despair (Mathabane 1995) is still too new to produce a fair judgement.

Patriarchy As a Set of Variables – and African Locations in It

"Patriarchy" in a broad sense, pushed to the forefront by contemporary Feminism, including male supremacy over women as well as fatherly power over children, may be dissected into three aspects pertaining to the institution of the family, aspects of relations between generations, within couples, and between the sexes. For each of these some crucial indicators can be singled out, but in a global analysis they have to cast their net much wider than is usual in Western Feminism.

1. In the 1970s only a couple of per cent of Ghanaian marriages were of the Ordinance type, Oppong (1980:204).

Parent-child relations

At its core, patriarchy refers to the domination of the paternal generation over the child generation, and the latter's obligation of obedience and service to the former. In the wider meaning used here, patriarchy will also include other forms of first generation power, including that of mothers, mothers-in-law, and of maternal uncles in matrilineal families.

Obedience and dependence

If the African family has a single supreme value, it is probably fertility, rather than any equivalent of Confucian filial piety. However, respect for seniority is central to social systems, in which lineages and age-groups are core features of the social structure), and deference to elders is a pervasive norm. Strict paternal and teacher discipline is also a frequent theme of the autobiographical literature (e.g. Bâ 1992:249, Kenyatta 1938/1961:9, Laye 1953/1997:71–2, Mandela 1994:5, 21, Nkrumah 1957:11, 16–17, Odinga 1967:11). True, these eminent gentlemen were children quite some time ago.

How the widespread custom of foster parentage ties in with child obedience seems unclear to me, but there are no indications of it meaning child freedom.

The norm of deference to parents is included in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, whose §29 stipulates that everyone is obliged "to respect his parents at all times, and to maintain them in case of need", and should be taken as a valid social norm (Goolam 1998:373ff). Under the influence of the UN Conventions, and internal democratization, South Africa was in the second half of the 1990s engaged in a legislative effort at establishing children's rights, but this is clearly a novel departure in African normativity (Sloth-Nielsen and van Heerden 1998, Goolam 1998)

Children's marriages

To what extent does the parent generation govern the family formation of the child generation? Do parents arrange marriages? Do they at least have some veto power, in a norm of parental consent? Or is the coupling of the child generation a choice of its own?

Traditionally, among most African peoples the parental generation concluded marriages without much involvement of their children, particularly not of their daughters. But there are also known customs of direct consent, e.g., among the Gikuyu (Kenyatta 1938/1961:165ff), among high status Ashanti (Rattray 1923:78), and in the modern interpretation of customary law in Nigeria (Nwogugu 1974:43). National statutory law has often introduced an explicit requirement of the consent of the marriage parties themselves, for instance in the Côte d'Ivoire Civil Code of 1964 or the Tanzanian Law of Marriage Act from 1971.

All the signs indicate that parental arrangement has declined strongly, although it has not disappeared, for instance, among the Hausa of northern Nigeria (Werthmann 1997:133ff), or among the Minyanka of Mali (Rondeau 1994:193–4)

Parental consent, on the other hand, still seems crucial, although sometimes circumvented. Apparently, African parents, and kin, still play a considerable role in marriage arrangements, through the still widespread norm of bridewealth, and through other means (Lestaeghe et al. 1989:241, Potash 1995:82ff, Rwezaura 1998: 186–7, Rondeau 1994:193ff). Parental consent is apparently still a widely spread norm, if far from always and everywhere obeyed. The Legal Age of Majority Act in Zimbabwe of 1982, which made marriage without parental consent legally permitted, created an uproar among the chiefs (Folbre 1988:74–5).

The Household of Adult Children

Does a new couple enter into an extended family household, headed by the parental generation? Alternatively, is there a norm of establishing the new household close to that of either parental set of the newly-weds? Or is neolocality the expectation? And what about caring for old and needy parents?

The predominant traditional pattern was to move into the husband's father's household, and European neolocality was clearly a marginal exception. In spite of urbanization, the persistent economic crises seem to have reproduced extended households of various sorts. For Black South Africa, for instance, with its high degrees of proletarianization and urbanization, Ziehl (forthcoming:table 8.2) reports 45% of households as extended. In the vast continental countryside, these extended families are still the rule (cf. Weisner et al. 1997). The extended family is the major social safety net in Africa (Sokolovsky 2000, Weisner et al. 1997), although loss of respect for and neglect of elders are also found (Cattell 1997, Bradley 1997, both reporting from rural Kenya).

African households in the mid- to late 1980s reportedly most often comprised an average of 2.7 adults per household, in very polygamous Senegal 4.4. The African average was actually somewhat lower than that of North Africa, Southeast Asia, and Andean Latin America (Ayad et al. 1994:table 6.2). How comparable these fertility survey data and household definitions are across monogamous and polygamous family systems, is not yet clear to me, however.

A further aspect of the householding of grown-up children is the location of youth. Do the youngsters leave their parental home only to get married – apart from institutional leave of absence at schools in loco parentis or in the army? Or is there a period of independent young single living? This is currently a major divide between Northern and Southern European families.

To my knowledge there are no systematic, general African data on this. From the general family set-up one may suspect, that single householding is quite limited. True, there are reports of the emergence of single living in some cities in the 1960s

and 1970s, such as Abidjan (Levasseur 1976:330ff) and Accra (Oppong 1980:205ff). The possible time-span of independent youth is variable, as the age of marriage varies considerably across the African continent, though, something which we shall come back to below.

The patriarchality of these extended households may vary, including some matriarchs, as both the rural out-migration areas and many poor urban households have a matrifocal tendency (Caldwell et al. 1999:figure 2, UN 2000b:table 2b, Pauw 1962). Among African children born in the Johannesburg-Soweto area in 1990, only 40 per cent were living with both their parents by the age of six, although six of ten had a "father figure" in the house (Barbarin and Richter 2001:141, 226–9). But on the whole it seems to be fair bet, that power is invested in senior males. In matrilineal or bilateral societies, that role is then played by a maternal uncle or a brother (Potash 1995:77ff, Jacobsson-Widding 1992, Vuyk 1991).

To sum up, with regard to parent-child relations, Africa at the beginning of the 21st century is still a continent of patriarchy, although there is more freedom concerning marriage than in South Asia.

Coupling

Male-female coupling has two dimensions pertinent to patriarchy. One refers to the social-emotional importance of the conjugal bond, its extension of activities, its intensity of attachment. The other to the internal structure of coupling. The two dimensions can vary, and have historically varied, independently of each other, although in modern times there is a tendency towards clustering. The north-western European family is the one most focused on the male-female couple, and also the one most committed to egalitarianism. The African, and particularly the West Coast African, family is something of a global diagonal to the north-western European, with a very blurred conjugal focus and with a clearly asymmetrical internal structure of power. The Arab-Muslim and the Asian family systems have considerably weaker conjugal ties than the European, but, on the whole, stronger than the African.

In part, the two dimensions compensate for each other, the most intensive and extensive bond having the stronger egalitarian tendencies, the more segregated and detached relations of coupling being more hierarchical.

With regard to the structure of male-female coupling, there are three major aspects pertinent to analyses of patriarchy.

Sexual Asymmetry

Polygyny and concubinage, a man having two or more wives, alternatively a wife and one or more concubines or "minor wives", is the most explicit form of sexual asym-

metry in coupling.[1] Sexual double morality is another, slightly weaker version. It may be institutionalized and even legalized with regard to mistresses – "kept women" and their offspring are another manifestation – or just expressed in different norms of extra-marital or pre-marital sex.

In this respect, Africa is above all the world's centre of polygyny. It is not unique, as Muslim law allows polygyny, but the prevalence is incomparably high.

Table 4. African Polygyny around 2000

Percentage of married women 15–49 having at least one co-wife			
High score		*Low score*	
Burkina Faso	55	Burundi	12a
Guinea	54	Namibia	12
Benin	50	Rwanda	14
Senegal	49	Ehtiopia	14
Mali	44	Kenya	16
Togo	43	Zambia	17
Chad	39	Zimbabwe	19
Niger	38	Gabon	22
Nigeria	36	Ghana	23
Côte d'Ivore	35	Mozambique	28
Uganda	33	Tanzania	28
Malawi	32		

Memorandum	
Northern Sudan	20a
Yemen	7
Nepal	6
Madagascar	4

Source: All data are from the international Demographic and Health Surveys, see Therborn (2004:178).
NOTE: a. 1986–90

Even with a certain margin of error, surveying and cross-cultural, the stark difference between, say, Catholic African Burundi, or the Christian half of Ghana where a fourth of Christian women were in polygamous unions (Klomegah 1997:83), and Muslim Arab Yemen or Egypt is clear. Today, polygyny is, above all else, an African institution, recently legitimized by the advanced egalitarian South African legislation (Nhlapo 1998:633), although a rare formal practice there.

1. Polyandry, a woman having two or more husbands, is a rare family form, which may be found in Tibet and in the Himalaya region, for instance. It is not at all to be considered the inverse of polygamy, or to be confounded with the constellation of an entertainment star and her circle of lovers. The husbands are not chosen by the wife, and power in polyandry usually rests with the elder husband, and the other(s) is/are normally his younger brother(s).

Polygyny also goes together with a whole palette of informal asymmetrical sexual relations, often with fancy designations, like the West African "deuxième bureau", literally second office, but a classic code word for the French secret service, "outside wives", or "second house".

In regard to institutionalized sexual asymmetry, Africa is *sui generis*.

Gender Hierarchy

The classical patriarchal family had decisive power clearly vested in the husband – and/or his father – to whom the wife owed submission and obedience. Hierarchical coupling and family formation are expressed in the concept of the "head of the family", who is normally male. Normative male superiority is often further buttressed by a considerable age difference between groom and bride. The strongest form of male domination of the couple relationship is arguably the Muslim rule of *talaq*, of an unhindered, exclusively male right to unilateral divorce. A similar right to "oust one's wife" also existed in imperial China.

A male–female hierarchy is pervasive in the African tradition, like all major family traditions. It is generally buttressed by the important, widespun kinship networks – but also mitigated and complicated by the latter – and by local rule by elders and chiefs. However, this hierarchy is more complicated and more variable than Asian family systems. Among the very masculinist patrilineal East and Southern African populations, the bridewealth institution, which is still operating, means that daughters are assets to their fathers – instead of just more or less costly liabilities as in classical East and South Asia – and wives a considerable investment for husbands. As a prominent South African lawyer has put it: "the whole [African] marriage drama is premised on the notion that the man's family are the supplicants and the woman's people the holders of power" (Nhlapo 1998:623). That is almost symmetrically the opposite of the contemporary Indian dowry relationship.

The complex and conflictual male supremacy in Africa is illustrated by the remarkable Creation Myth of the Gikuyus. Gikuyu, the First Man, had nine daughters and no sons, but the Divider of the Universe was moved to provide him with nine young men, who married his daughters. The women ruled a first society of nine maternal clans, oppressing the men. The men then banded together, made all the women pregnant at the same time, and when the latter were no longer capable of fighting due to their advanced pregnancy, the men carried out a revolution. The men took power, established themselves as the heads of families, and changed the name of the nation to the paternal Children of Gikuyu. However, the women made a last stand over the clan names, threatening to kill all male children, and to refuse to bear any more. Confronted by this threat, the males conceded on this single point, and the clans continued to bear the names of the nine daughters of Gikuyu (Kenyatta 1938/1961:3ff).

Most African customary family law places adult women firmly under male guardians, usually the husband, i.e., as legal minors (cf. Cotran 1968, Philips and Morris 1971, Stewart and Armstrong 1990). Post-colonial national law maintained a discriminatory stance against women. For instance, in the late 1980s, Nigerian women had to secure the permission of their father or their husband to get a passport, a bank loan, a scholarship, custody rights over their children (Nwabara 1985:9).

Only in recent years is statutory law trying to change this, with the Zimbabwean Legal Majority Act of 1982 one of the first of social significance. In the mid-1990s, with the democratization of South Africa, a vigorous movement towards legal gender equality asserted itself in Southern Africa (Eekelaar and Nhlapo 1998). In the Francophone states, however, Napoleonic stipulations of the wifely duty of obedience have sometimes been put onto the statutes recently, as in §32 of the Mali Personal Status Act of 1987 (Bergmann and Ferid 1998:25).

In West and Central Africa adult gender relations are much complicated by matrilineal descent, which in itself did not preclude male supremacy, but it weakened the power of the husband and the father considerably, and maternal uncles could seldom compensate for that. Furthermore, even among patrilineal West Coast peoples, such as the Yoruba and the Igbo, or even among the sterner patriarchie of the Hausa and the Fulani, married women are not thrown out of their father's lineage, as in East Asia and northern India, but can count on the support of their own kin (cf. Caldwell 1996).

Obliquely, the African marital hierarchy has been cut into by recent national legislation on widows' inheritance rights. Under customary law, widows normally inherited nothing from their husbands. In patrilineal societies, his male descendants were the normal heirs, in matrilineal ones his brothers or, for lack of them, his nephews (see, e.g., Obi 1966:332ff, on inheritance in Southern Nigeria). Ghana's 1985 Intestate Succession Law, for example, made the surviving spouse the primary heir (Oheneba-Sakyi 1999:166ff). In 1996 a gathering of Zimbabwe chiefs came to a similar conclusion (Stewart 1998:222).

Mass polygamy is made demographically possible by men marrying much later than women. In this age difference there is also a gender hierarchy, between a more experienced male and a less experienced female, underlined in very age-grade conscious societies. Studies of conjugal decision-making have also found a significant impact of the age relationship of the spouses (e.g., on Accra upper middle class couples, Oppong 1970:table 1). In the 1990s the age difference at first marriage of men and women is highest in the world in the Sahel and in the West Coast states, ranging from about nine years in Gambia and Burkina Faso to six years in Chad and Niger, in Nigeria on the average about seven years. In Hausaland and generally in the Sahel, girls still marry in their teens to men seven to nine years older (UN 2001b, Heaton and Hirschl 1999). Compared to the mid- and late 1970s there has been a certain

decrease of the age gap in sub-Saharan Africa as well as in Saharan and Northern Africa and Muslim South Asia, the regions with the largest gaps (cf. Casterline et al. 1986:table 1).

Gender Autonomy

African family systems have shown that hierarchy and autonomy may vary independently of each other, because of the flexibility of the conjugal bond, or of the porosity of the couple relationship. In West Africa, in particular, polygamy and male-female legal hierarchy are often combined with a great amount of wifely economic autonomy and independence. The wives each have their own household and plot of land, and of tradition many West African women are formidable traders, usually in full control of their business and their earnings (Caldwell 1996).

The traditional wifely autonomy, working her (allotted) plot of land or plying her trade, has also been transposed to the urban salariat. About a sample of Accra civil servants in the 1960s, it could be said: "… few couples were spending, saving, or owning property together" (Oppong 1971:184). No scholarly report on the European family could ever have said that.

However, along the Afro-European diagonal of weak bonding/strong hierarchy-strong bonding/weak hierarchy there is a noteworthy rapprochement of Scandinavian and West Coast African gender autonomy.

At the beginning of the last third of the 20th century, Scandinavian countries began a practice of individual taxation, making for economic autonomy within marriage. At the other end of a continuum, the wife is completely dependent on her husband – or "merged" as in the old Common Law tradition – dependent on his income, and having to have his permission to do anything outside the home, as in the Napoleonic law tradition of Latin Europe and Latin America.

West Coast African autonomy is primarily socio-economic, neither legal (see above) nor sexual or procreative. At least until very recently, decisions about family reproduction were firmly in male hands (Caldwell and Caldwell 1993:343).

Gender Sacrifice

Male supremacy in sexual and family relations has also given rise to various forms of female sacrifice, of which a comparative overview can only hope to touch physical-material aspects, not the frequent social and psychological ones.

There are two aspects here, one corporeal, the other material. The former covers a range over the life-course from female infanticide or fatal neglect of female infants, via aesthetic cruelty, such as the classical Chinese custom of foot-binding, and sexual mutilation, to daughter-in-law maltreatment, and widow immolation. The latter focuses on the rights of inheritance, or not, of daughters.

In varying forms of severity female circumcision is a widespread practice in Africa in a broad belt from Senegal (though not among its main ethnie the Wolof) via north-

ern Nigeria, contemporary Central African Republic to the Horn, and with an eastern north-south extension from Tanzania to Egypt, including the Copts (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1994/l997:206–7). Infibulation, the worst form – involving excision of the entire clitoris, the labia minora and maiora, and the sewing up of the remnants of the labia maiora – is concentrated to pastoralist or agro-pastoralist peoples in a narrower and shorter belt from Chad to Somalia and Eritrea (Hicks 1996). Only recently has sexual mutilation come under attack and into legislative initiative in Africa.

Sexual violence is difficult to document in a systematic fashion, but it is certainly an expression of abuse of women as sacrificial objects. The violent despair and uprootedness spawned by the apartheid regime seem to have made widespread sexual violence endemic in South Africa (Mama, October 2001, oral communication, cf. the chilling three-generation story of Mathabane 1995). Wife-beating has an amazing legitimacy, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa. Among women born in l975-80, 38% in Malawi, 53% in Zimbabwe, and 79% in Uganda agreed to at least one of five asked reasons for husband to beat his wife. (Neglecting the children and going out without telling him were the most popular reasons. Adultery was not on the list. Therborn 2004:118)

Veiling and female seclusion have caught on in Muslim Africa south of the Sahara only patchily and partly. It is important among the upper classes of Northern Nigeria, above all, without making extra-domestic economic activities impossible (Werthmann 1997). African Muslims are, in this respect, more similar to their Southeast Asian co-religionists than to their pious Arab neighbours or to the north Indian practitioners of *purdah*.

Female infanticide is an old north Indian and Chinese custom. Suspect gender ratios have long been known in northern India, and have re-emerged with birth control in China and in South Korea. The African bridewealth system makes such a practice meaningless, and it seems to be unknown. African widows, in contrast to their traditional South and East Asian sisters, have always been eminently remarriable, often inherited by a brother of the deceased. Nor have African divorcees been pushed out of the marriage market.

On the other hand, African customary law usually made daughters go without inheritance. In colonial times, Yoruba law in Nigeria was changed to give daughters inheritance rights, including to land. But that was unique in Nigeria, where otherwise only sons inherited from their fathers, and their brothers or nephews inherited from matrilineal fathers (Obi 1966:332ff), and on the whole in Africa, daughters did not inherit from their fathers, who usually held the wealth of the parental generation (Goody 1976:5ff, Cotran 1968, Stewart and Armstrong 1990). To the extent that its believers followed Islamic law, the latter represented an advance for daughters' rights in Africa, allowing them at least half of the share of sons. Only with the recent wave of anti-discriminatory legislation is a gendered equalization of inheritance coming into sight.

The daughters of Africa have had to make painful sacrifices to male power, but, at least outside the infibulating Horn, less so than many Asian women.

Patriarchy in 2000 C.E.

By 2000, familial patriarchy has, by and large, been successfully torn down in Europe and in the European overseas settlements of the New Worlds, although much less so in Japan. The very different timing indicates, that successful industrialization and economic growth are not adequate explanations for this. Legal equality of spouses was established after World War I in the Soviet Union and in the Nordic countries. Substantive progress, but short of complete equality, was also made in the 1920s in the UK, the US, and in the British Dominions.

After World War II, the Communists established legal equality in Eastern Europe and in China, and the American occupation did so in Japan. Behavioural changes were more gradual in both countries, however. East Asia generally, China in particular, and Eastern Europe are the areas of most radical change in the 20th century.

North-Western Europe and its overseas off-shoots were the least patriarchal part of the world in 1900, and they are so in 2000. The remaining patriarchal blot in 2000 refers to women's remaining dependence on husband's income, as expressed in still strongly gendered employment rates outside Scandinavia.

After the transformation of Confucian China, the three most patriarchal cultures of the world are, South Asian Hinduism (and Islam) – in spite of formal equality legislation in India – West Asian/North African Islam, and Sub-Saharan Africa, especially outside or only on the margin of the influence of the two mid-Eastern world religions. At this point at least, the comparative measure is too crude to allow any strong argument about an internal ranking of these three. But their distance to the North Atlantic area is clearly substantial.

On the other hand, there is also, at the end of the 20th century, a remarkable global politics of gender, intertwining global egalitarian efforts, through the UN machinery, national symbolic politics, local action, and national-local clientelism. On paper, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a great success. By March 2000 it had been ratified by all countries of the world, except Afghanistan, São Tomé and Principe, and the United States (UN 2000b:table 6b). In the 1990s gender politics became high-profile symbolic politics in many Third World countries, including military regimes. Pace-setters in Africa were the "First Ladies" of Nigerian military dictators Babangida, Abacha, and (with more restraint and more seriousness) Abubakar. Mrs Rawlings of Ghana, among others, followed the example (Mama 1999).

The Secularization and the Spatial Divergence of Sex and Marriage

Marriage is the key institution regulating human sexuality. It should therefore be analyzed sociologically as a "sex-marriage complex" of behaviour and of norms. In view of a great deal of recent writing on the topic, to acquire a proper understanding of what is happening to sex and marriage it is best to start by underlining the enduring centrality of marriage, and more generally of long term heterosexual coupling, in human societies.

The Historical Importance of Marriage

Marriage is still an almost universal aspiration and achievement. For people born around 1950 we have global data for people who had been married by the age of 45–49, i.e., by the end of female fertility. Among the 199 politically delimited territories, the only ones in which less than two thirds of women had been married by the end of their fertility were Caribbean countries and dependent territories, products of plantation slavery and indentured labour, giving rise to what I have called the Afro-Creole family. In Jamaica, for instance, only 54 per cent had ever married, in Barbados 60 per cent, in Guyana 62 per cent.

Outside the Caribbean and Southern Africa, some small other (mainly Pacific) islands apart, the only countries with less than ninety per cent of their women married at some time were, on the one hand some South American ones harbouring "Indo-Creole" families, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and on the other two Nordic ones Finland and Sweden. All these had a marriage rate around 85 per cent. For the rest of the world, the percentages married at some time resemble electoral results in dictatorships, US 93.9, UK 95.1, Japan 95.4, Spain 91.9, Russia 96.5, Egypt 98.6, Brazil 92.0, China 99.8, India 99.3, Indonesia 98.5. Representative African examples include, Côte d'Ivoire 99.3, Ethiopia 99.1, Nigeria 97.8, Tanzania 99.3, Zimbabwe 99.4 (UN 2001b).

On the whole, Africa has belonged to the vast world regions of virtually universal marriage (Brass et al. l968:201–2). However, in recent times Africa also includes some deviants, above all in Southern Africa, although the Gabon figure of 90.6 too indicates a marriage rate below the universal one. Botswana in 1991 had a marriage rate of women at 45–49 in between the Caribbean and the Scandinavian, at 77.6. The Botswana rate of non-marriage of the 1990s is similar to the Scandinavian one of the 1930s. Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland had about a tenth of their women never having been married at the end of their fertile period, resembling Europe west of the Trieste-Saint Petersburg line in 1900 (cf. Hajnal 1953). The reason for the limits to marriage in Southern Africa most likely derives from the disruptions caused by long-distance male labour migration.

The Contraction and the Secularization of Marriage: Age, Cohabitation, and Divorce

The space of marriage is contracting through the rise of the marriage age. The age of first marriage is going up virtually everywhere in the world, although in countries characterized or strongly influenced by the classical modern north-western European family system the marriage age is now returning to previous peaks after declining for most of the 20th century (Hajnal 1953:120, UN 2001b).

The mean female age at first marriage (SMAM) has risen in Japan from 21 in 1920 to 25 in 1960, and to 27 in 1990; in China from 19 in 1955 to 22 in 1990, in India from 14 in 1901 to 16 in 1961, and to 19 in 1991 (then one of the rather few countries of the world where women were still largely marrying in their teens); in Egypt from 20 in 1960 to 22 in 1995; in Morocco from 17.5 to 26 between 1960 and 1995; in Mexico from 20 to 22 between 1960 and 1990.

Africa seems to follow this pattern, although exact, and longer, time series are often lacking. Since the 1950s the female age at first marriage in Guinea has risen from 16 to 19 in 1990, in Niger from 15 to 18. In Burundi it has stayed at 22. In Congo-Kinshasa and in Mozambique it may have declined though. From around 1980 to the early 1990s the marriage age rose in Nigeria from 19 to 20, in Côte d'Ivoire from 19 to 21, in Zimbabwe from 20 to 21, and in Botswana from 26 to 27, the same age as in South Africa then (UN 1989, 2001b, Lestaeghe 1989:table 6.16).

There appears to be a certain convergence among the African countries. The later marrying peoples of Southern Africa and Burundi-Rwanda now diverge less from the rest. The Sahel and Uganda still marry their daughters in their teens, leaving them little youth before their wifely roles.

Secularization of marriage manifests itself most clearly in informal cohabitation. Such "consensual unions" were historically an old, widespread phenomenon among blacks, mulattoes/mestizos, and uprooted Indians in the Americas, and were quite frequent among the European working-classes of nineteenth century big cities. Such unions were generally those of the poor and the peripheral, and in Europe they declined strongly in the course of he 20th century.

The new, "respectable", socially central cohabitation, still largely a European/North American/Oceanic phenomenon started in the 1970s. In the form of a brief trial marriage it had even reached a European royal dynasty and its succession to the throne in 2000, when the Norwegian Crown Prince announced that he was moving in with his beloved whom he duly married a year later. In North-Western Europe informal cohabitation made up between a fifth (Britain) and a fourth (Sweden and Denmark) of all couples in 1995 (Eurostat 2000:48, Halsey 2000:60; SCB 1993). In this, religiously the most secularized, part of the world, informal cohabitation has become the predominant form of first coupling.

In Africa, the line between marriage and non-marriage unions has often been more blurred than in the core areas of the world religions, largely because of the often long drawn-out and complicated bridewealth negotiation and payment pro-

cess. Colonial authorities also tended to treat unions according to customary law as something less than a marriage.[1] However, there is a uniquely careful Belgian colonial census of the Congo in 1956–57, which distinguished "de facto unions" from all others, by having no bridewealth paid and no ceremony held. Such unions then constituted eight per cent of all Congolese unions. They were apparently primarily trial marriages, of a kind which thirty-forty years later has become similarly frequent in France and other countries of Western-Central Europe. A third of teen-age women in unions in Leopoldville lived in such informal cohabitation, and a fifth of women at the age of 20–24, falling to ten per cent in the next age category, but then never going below six per cent (Brass et al. 1968:213).

In Congo, cohabitation was clearly established on a significant scale at least ten-fifteen years earlier than in Scandinavia. Here is a significant rift in African patriarchy, as well as an informalization of marriage, which at least in large part probably derives from the matrilineality of many Congolese peoples.

In the mid 1970s, Meyer Fortes (l978:29) reported from West Africa: "Consensual, free and casual unions from which children result are of wide occurrence", which by then might be said about Denmark and Sweden, but hardly about the rest of Europe. In East Africa, a Tanzanian White Paper of 1969 took account of a significant rise of informal cohabitation, suggesting that family law should recognize such unions (Rwezaura 1998:178). This was about the same time that the Swedish legal apparatus began to pay attention to the issue.

The 1980/81 Fertility Survey of Côte d'Ivoire found a very high proportion of coupling starting as informal cohabitation, but also a great ethnic variation. Among the matrilineal Akan and Kru sixty and forty per cent, respectively, began their first union as informal cohabitation whereas about twenty per cent of the patrilineal Mande did (Gage-Brandon 1993:223).

South African knowledge about family relationships was until recently hampered both by the legal non-recognition of customary African marriage and by the secretiveness of the apartheid regime (Caldwell and Caldwell 1993). However, data from the 1991 census, showing an eighth of people in unions cohabiting (Ziehl forthcoming), indicates a pattern similar to Western or North-western Europe. In Johannesburg-Soweto half of all children born in 1990 were born out of wedlock, and about a third to single mothers, in Kampala about the same time a fourth of children were born to unmarried mothers (Barbarin and Richter 2001:141, 226).

Marriage has been extended by the strong decline of adult mortality and by the increased longevity of older people. But in the most recent years that tendency is

1. The lack of correspondence between African and colonial norms made even ambitious census undertakings by colonial powers incapable of getting a good picture of the family structure. For instance, a census in 1956–7 of four cities in Côte d'Ivoire of similar size and ethnic make-up undertaken by four different census teams reported percentages in "free unions" ranging from 1 to 66 per cent (Brass et al. 1968:188).

being overtaken by a rise in divorce. Only among Swedish children born in the forties and later was divorce a more frequent reason for family disruption than death, and a somewhat larger proportion of those born in the 1960s lived for at least 16 years with both their parents than did the birth cohort of the 1900s (SCB 1992). In the United States there were more widowers than male divorcees until the 1970s, and more widows than female divorcees till 1997 (US Bureau of the Census 2001, table HH-1). Now more than a fourth of all marriages which took place in the EU in the early 1980s had been dissolved by the late nineties, in Britain and Scandinavia 40–46 per cent, in France and Germany a third.

In the Christian and Hindu worlds, but not in the Muslim or the Buddhist, the possibility of no-fault, non-refuseable divorce constitutes a further indicator of the secularization of marriage. The first massive rise of Christian divorce occurred after World War I in the former belligerent countries (Philips 1991:186). The 1920s was also the period in which the Lutheran Scandinavian countries legislated no-fault divorce. For the rest of the Christian world liberal divorce legislation started in the English-speaking countries in the late 1960s, spreading to most of it in the ensuing decades (Castles and Flood 1993), mainly leaving out only Ireland and Chile.

The current rates as well as the historical tendency of divorce vary greatly across the world. The divorce rate, intercontinentally most often measured by the crude rate per thousand population (or over 15 years), is currently highest in USA, in post-Communist Europe, and in Cuba. Japan has a relatively low rate of divorce, China even more so, and divorce is still rather rare in India.

Historically, divorce was practised on a uniquely massive scale by the Muslim Malays of Southeast Asia, in today's Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore (Jones 1994). Next, but far behind was Egypt, and then came the United States. The trajectories crossed each other in the second half of the twentieth century.

Marriages in some parts of Africa have long had a considerable instability, while in others divorce was difficult and rare (e.g., Burnham 1987:41ff). The thinness of the marital bond coupled with the thickness of kinship, and, particularly in Southern Africa, male long-distance labour migration, make for lengthy separations of spouses among many populations. A remarkable ethnographic example is provided by Fulani pastoralists of the West African savannah. When the children are grown up, the father has transmitted his property to them, and the parental couple then often split up, settling with one or the other of their off-spring or among their own native kin (Burnham 1987:48).

Around 1970, divorce was pretty widespread in Africa. If we take Sweden as a yardstick – which then had the second highest divorce rate in Western Europe but was clearly behind USA – for the infrequent UN measure of the percentage of women above the age of 15 who are divorced and separated, we get the following picture – 4.2% of Swedish women were then divorced (calculated from SCB 1999: 34). Higher rates were recorded for many African countries, Botswana 6.7, Ethiopia

8.4, Uganda 7.2, Tanzania 5.5, and Zambia 9.1 (UN 1989:table 4). Kenya had 3.3, Liberia 3.9 per cent divorced. Not all African countries were included in this database, Ghana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe being among those missing.

The world-wide Demographic and Health Surveys of 1986–92 make a wider comparison possible. Four years after their first union, twenty per cent of Ghanaian, Liberian, Namibian, and Ugandan women had experienced its dissolution, whether by divorce or by death. In Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe 15–18 per cent, but in Nigeria only 7.5. Corresponding figures range from 10 (Morocco) to 2 (Jordan) per cent in the Arab world, and stand at 4 % in Pakistan and 6–7% in the classic high-divorce country Indonesia. Latin America is more similar to Africa, 11% of Brazilian women having their first union dissolved after four years, eight per cent of Mexican. Only the Caribbean, Afro-Creole family is more unstable than the African. Thirty per cent of Dominican women were out of their first union after four years (Westoff et al. 1994:table 4.1).

This African marital disruption is high also by European standards. In Britain, which with Denmark and Sweden now has the highest divorce rate in Western Europe, one would have to go to marriages contracted in 1993/94 (Halsey 2000:63) to find a rate of dissolution within four years about the same as all Ghanaian unions together exhibited in 1988.

The New Space of Sexuality

The sex-marriage complex has been, and is being, subjected to conflicting spatio-cultural processes of change. Sexuality has been increasingly secularized and its area of operation has expanded. By sexual secularization I mean sexuality being stripped of religious or other aprioristic, non-consequentialist normative rulings, as "sinful" or otherwise condemnable outside marriage, even if consensual and even if not betraying any promise or trust. This secularization has gone furthest in the Christian regions of the world – fundamentalist revivalism in parts of the US notwithstanding – but is also becoming very significant in the ex-Confucian area, in Buddhist countries, and among the African peoples, a minority it seems, who had strong norms against extra-marital sexuality. In Muslim and Hindu cultures changes are more limited.

Sexuality is also expanding, biologically in the lowering of the age of menarche, in time, with earlier sex debuts for whatever reason, and culturally, as the front stage of the entertainment industry. In Britain, for instance, the median age of first sexual intercourse decreased from 21 for women born in the 1930s and 1940s to 17 for women born between 1966 and 1975, with a sizeable minority sexually active before the (legal) age of sixteen (Wylie et al. 1997:1314). In Finland, 6–9 per cent of women born between 1933 and 1942 had sex before the age of 18, among those born after 1972 the corresponding figure was 55–60. Between a fourth and fifth had it before 16 (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1995:53, 54).

Changes in Japan came somewhat later, mainly in the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1974 11 per cent of female Japanese university students had had sexual intercourse, in 1986 26 per cent, and in 1995 43 per cent (Hatano and Shimazaki 1997:805). By contrast, in China in 1989/90 only six per cent of female university students had sexual experience (Ruan 1997:384), and in four universities of Egypt in 1996 only 3 per cent (el-Tawila 1998).

African religion and ethics have not included the sexual asceticism of Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Nor have they very often made the strict demarcation of legitimate and illicit sex drawn by orthodox Islam. But within Africa, there have been considerable differences of sexual permissiveness. West Coast and Middle Africa have been more permissive, the patrilineal societies of East and Southern Africa much less so (Caldwell et al. 1999).

From the above-mentioned 1986–92 surveys there are some data on the sexuality of teen-age women. The sexual revolution had clearly reached some African countries by the 1980s, if not earlier, while other countries stood outside. Sixty per cent of Botswana adolescent women had had sex, without ever being married. Corresponding figures were in Liberia 46, in Togo 37, in Ghana and Kenya 26 per cent. No sexual experience was reported for 91 per cent of Burundian teen-age women (who marry late), 68 per cent of Zimbabwe women, 60 per cent from Ghana, 54 per cent from Kenya, and 38 per cent from Uganda (Macro International 1992:chart 7). There is no abundance of systematic data on African sexual behaviour, but there are indicators of a lowering age of sexual initiation. Surveys of Ghana have later recorded a median age of female sexual experience of 17 and of 15 (Ankomah 1997:528–9).

On the basis of the l996-2001 DHS Surveys, we may distinguish four variants of the socio-sexual order in current Africa, along the axes of polygamy and sexual informality.

Table 5. Current African Sexual Orders

Informality	**Polygyny**	
	High	*Low*
High	Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo (Côte d'Ivoire) (Nigeria South)	Botswana, Namibia, South Africa (Gabon, Ghana)
Low	Niger, Senegal (Nigeria North)	Ethiopia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Source: Therborn (2004:214–15)

Huge and diverse Nigeria had better be allocated twice, with the North probably better at ease in the low informality group, but the source used here operates with national categories only. The other parentheses indicate some other qualification. The Ivory Coast is very much a country of informal sex, but its prevalence of

polygny is not very high in the African context. Inversely, polygny is not very low in Ghana and Gabon.

The upper left quadrant is made of West African countries with traditions of strong female autonomy, within patrilineal kinship, and with strong influence of indigenous African religion. In the right upper quadrant are two kinds of countries. One is the Southern group, with polygny pushed back by Christianity and economic marginalization, and informality promoted by the disruptions of long-distance labour migration and of urban slumming driven by apartheid. The other group are largely matrilineal countries with always especially weak conjugal bonds, reinforced by the dislocations of the African crisis since the l970s. The left lower quadrant has countries adding some of the Muslim rigour to the African customs of polygnyous patriarchy. Finally, in the right lower quadrant we see a combined influence of Christianity and the typical East and South African stern father´s right tradition.

While not an exhaustive explanation, religion, pre-modern kinship, and contemporary economics will provide us with the basic coordinates of the African socio-sexual order.

The difficult and controversial issue of the relations between patterns of sexual relations and the AIDS epidemic in Africa cannot be treated here.

The Past into the Future

The African family has been subjected to, and has participated in, the great global changes of family relations, which have taken place in the twentieth century, in particular in its second half. In the very last decades of the century, fertility reduction finally reached parts of Africa, but, as was to be expected, the African family system still maintains high fertility rates in a contemporary global perspective. African patriarchy has been partly eroded, particularly with respect to paternal control of marriage. The relatively weak marital bond has opened up a wider range of options. Very recent egalitarian drives, above all in Southern Africa, notwithstanding, male supremacy and parental generation claims on children are being reproduced. Polygyny has also proved very resilient, and so has the extended family, even in metropolitan areas (Barbarin and Richter 2001:148). For all its complexity and contradictions, with very considerable female economic autonomy, contemporary sub-Saharan Africa stands out as one of the most patriarchal, or male-dominated regions of the world, together with the Arab-Muslim area and South Asia. But much more than in the latter regions, there is a current tendency for many African men to shrink from family responsibility, which sooner or later also means abdicating from family power.

At least substantial parts of Africa are participating in the sexual revolution, in contrast, so far, to the other most patriarchal regions and to Mainland China. But the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with its disastrous mortality in Southern Africa, places it under a dark cloud. The continental impoverishment over recent decades is likely to

reinforce a commercialization of sex. Northern notions of "pure relationships" of intimacy appear to be a fading possibility.

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2. Demographic Innovation and Nutritional Catastrophe: Change, Lack of Change and Difference in Ghanaian Family Systems

Christine Oppong

Introduction

This essay attempts to view transformations in biological and social reproduction observed in Ghana within the context of the macro-economic and demographic changes taking place in a rapidly globalizing African state. Market and other powerful forces including environmental degradation and rapid population growth, are viewed as impacting family resources available for supporting birth and maternal and infant care, through increasing the pace of individual labour migration, scattering family members, decreasing kin solidarities and increasing cash requirements and the penetration of monetary transactions. Globalization processes are understood to be plural and continuous occurring in several waves and the discussion is socio-critical, highlighting concern for trends which appear widely visible and partly negative (Therborn 2000). It seeks to draw attention to economic and demographic factors linked in the past to falling family size norms and contraceptive innovation and the more recent disruption of customary norms and practices molding maternal care and feeding of infants. It is argued that dislocations in gender roles and relations and disruptions in mother care are seriously implicated in the high and even escalating crisis of infant under-nutrition. Like Fukuyama (1999) we seek to link a negative social trend (in this case infant hunger and under-nutrition) to changes occurring in productive and reproductive roles of women and men and a major disruption in social values.

An obvious change documented by the several rounds of Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys (GDHS) has been the drop in the fertility rate by about two children in as many decades. More anxiety provoking has been the apparently high and even rising levels of infant under-nourishment. Not only are people having fewer children, but a significant proportion appear unable to satisfy the basic nutrient needs of their infants and weanlings. Indeed breast feeding declined to such an extent that urgent programmes have had to be set up during the nineties to encourage mothers to breast feed by promoting more infant friendly environments in medical centres and elsewhere.

The dimensions of this problem have been recently delineated from the perspective of the infants themselves (Oppong 1999). Whereas formerly babies were the focus of kin concern and attention in the domestic group and rules and practices

sheltered the new mother and neonate from importunate sexual attention or labour demands from husband/fathers or others, now babies (and their mothers) appear to have lost many of their traditional entitlements and their capabilities have dwindled accordingly. For mothers, role strain, role conflict and lack of support and resources in both time and materials affect her ability to respond effectively to infant needs. Mothers' escalating work burdens both domestic and occupational, and decreasing conjugal and kin support and protection, are viewed as implicated in what has been termed a sharper productive/reproductive squeeze (Whitehead 1996). The emergence of a serious problem of street children in Accra and elsewhere is also a visible and tragic sign of the breakdown of parental care of numbers of older children. Adults are not only retreating from parenthood, they appear in many instances unable (or possibly unwilling) to cope with its responsibilities and demands.

The potential costs or deficits in infant (and child) care is a topic which has surfaced more and more in development discourse (both human and economic) and the recent writings of some feminist economists and concerned sociologists among others.[1] This rising interest is occurring as the profoundly destabilizing impacts of rampant, profit motivated, market forces and globalization are causing widespread escalation of individual anxieties and economic insecurities, and often increased workloads, especially for women, and particularly in Africa. Indeed these effects are having deleterious impacts on intimate aspects of the daily lives of women and men and their children in all corners of the globe. Indeed the caring deficit in general and the parental deficit in particular is by now widely recognized as directly threatening levels of child development and human survival and accordingly as seriously jeopardizing the sustainability of economic development (e.g., UNDP 1999, Folbre 1994, 1999).

The subject of this essay therefore involves tracing apparent or perceived linkages between on the one hand macro economic and demographic transformations occurring at the level of state and community and on the other hand intimate, often emotionally charged, individual behaviours, affecting the survival, health, well being and quality of life of other family members. The economic and demographic transformations are manifested in the rapidly escalating numbers of insecure, landless people and rapidly rising numbers of unemployed; the dwindling value of incomes; the scattering of kin far and wide and the frequent separation of spouses and their children and escalating family deprivations and tensions, even conflict. The impacted intimate behaviours include sexual contacts and contraception, procreation, lactation and weaning.

Demographic data, which appear at first sight anomalous, form a springboard for discussion. For recent statistics from Ghana on health, nutrition and population, made available by the World Bank (Gwatkin et al. 2000) on the basis of findings of

1. See for example Etzioni (1993) on the *parenting deficit* in the U.S.A.

the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) make salutary and interesting reading (see Table 1). Like the data from the rest of Africa not only do levels of both maternal and infant under-nutrition appear unacceptably high but there is surprisingly little difference by wealth quintile (Wagstaff 2000).[1] Both mothers and infants under three years of age among the non-poor, as well as those who are poorer, appear to exhibit persistently high proportions of individuals underweight, and this in a country where, statistically at least, in the past females have enjoyed comparatively high levels of "empowerment"[2], and, at least according to the official figures, levels of dietary energy supply (DES) have been rising. Unhappily more than a quarter of infants, even in those households classified as non-poor, are recorded as being moderately or severely underweight and nearly 23 per cent as stunted, (comparatively short for their age). Meanwhile 12.1 per cent of non-poor mothers have a low Body Mass Index (BMI), even more of them than the poorest of the poor. We ask why is there such little variation in infant nutritional status by wealth of household, a pattern which characterizes the whole region. In contrast there is evidence of greater differences by asset holding for other parameters; namely contraceptive use, fertility levels and health seeking behaviour. In these cases individuals in non-poor households show a much greater propensity than the poor, to make use of modern contraceptives and available health care resources and to achieve lower fertility and better health. There are also marked contrasts with regard to contraceptive innovation between the behaviour of females and males (see Table 1). Better off males form the category of adults apparently most enthusiastic in their adoption of modern family planning devices (condoms).

Dislocation, Differentiation and Trauma

The many social changes endured in Ghana as the result of global trends, as well as national policies, lack of policies and varying types of governance, have included the escalating pauperization, increasing inequality and economic stagnation occurring and escalating, during four and more decades of post-independence regimes. Already more than twenty years ago in 1980, following a period of political instability and change, analysts were highlighting the reduction to a shambles of the, erstwhile, dynamic cocoa export sector and the overall, exceptionally poor economic performance (e.g., Bequele 1980). Currently they are questioning how a country, apparently quite recently a prime example, even show case, of Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) success and an obedient, even model, recipient of World Bank, IMF best advice and potent economic medicine, could have so quickly sunk into the

1. See also Alderman (1990) – the positive relationship between income and nutrition levels is surprisingly difficult to demonstrate and often contradicted.
2. See UNDP (1996:35) gender disparity GEM GDI and HDI ranking of 104 countries. Ghana ranks 9th out of 23 African countries on the Gender Empowerment Measure.

lowest basket of the world's most Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)! Daily revelations in current local newsprint, on questions such as, *Where did the proceeds of cocoa sales go?*, and *How the statistics were doctored!* point to the answer that at least at the national level, lack of financial probity, poor – even false – accounting practices and lack of good governance, during the past two decades or more, have been deeply implicated in the rapid fall from grace; not to mention the worsening terms of trade, the relentless process of deindustrialization and a slippery slide into deeper and deeper indebtedness.[1] Of course underlying these were also the processes of globalization and the "avoidable hardship" caused by the structural adjustment processes themselves (Collier and Gunning 1999). Long term, steeply downward wage trends are an indicator of the extent of hardship suffered by individual workers and their families.[2] The mass exodus of thousands of trained personnel, and workers in the prime of life, including health workers, teachers and others to seek viable incomes through employment around the world, has been one obvious dimension of the pervasive inclusion in the far reaching processes of globalization. Another has been the creeping takeover of foreigners, at knocked down prices, of key national economic assets, including the dry dock, mines, media, communications and transport. In the meantime the national health and education systems have become increasingly fragile and vulnerable to yet further shocks, deprived of the required resources human as well as material.

For our purposes here it will suffice to note that profound economic stagnation and decline and lack of opportunities, for the thousands schooled to expect jobs with commensurate incomes, have led to massive and successive waves of labour migration of both females and males, over several decades and on an unprecedented scale. This has been taking place both within and outside the country, and over land and seas. Globalizing tendencies have been cumulative and began long ago. Already in the sixties Caldwell (1969) was documenting the massive rural to urban migration in Ghana, resulting in more than a quarter of the population living in towns. Such profound and widespread spatial population dislocation has among other things intensified the inter-cultural contact, even cultural trauma, associated earlier with the psychic dislocation of the colonial experience and has rapidly increased the pressures of globalization and its potential discontents. The last are due to grow, as individual expectations rise and means to achieve them inexplicably dwindle, in the face of the inexorable downward slide of the value of the local *cede* currency, only recently halted, for the time being at least. The latter has no doubt been fuelled by the escalation of the national debt during the earlier regime. Meanwhile exposure through

1. See *The Statesman* vol.11, no. 14. November 13, 2001 front page headline Cocoa Cash Funded NDC.

2. In the mid-nineties there were substantial falls in real wages of the unskilled (23–26 per cent) and these wages were themselves lower than those of the mid-eighties and approximately one third of the level of the early seventies (Teal 2000)!

travel and modern media and vicarious experience, to totally different ways of being and doing and possessing, and to apparent individual liberties of many new kinds, has led to escalating expectations, which are difficult if not impossible to satisfy; not least in the sexual and domestic domains.

Reproductive Strategies and Family Outcomes

With respect to the concern of this essay – the changing nature of parenthood and infant care – innovative, *legitimate reproductive strategies*, in the face of financial problems and social dilemmas, of stress, strain, conflict and anxiety are several. They can include demographic and contraceptive *innovation*: that is postponing the first birth, lowering family size ideals and aspirations as well as achievements, and using modern as well as traditional birth control methods. Meanwhile legitimate mechanisms to cope with reproductive responsibilities already acquired include resource accumulation, such as by getting more education and increasing social capital (e.g., forming community organizations to set up crèches, bringing more people into the domestic group to act as carers etc.). *Illegitimate adaptations or retreatist strategies,* in the face of dilemmas of what may be perceived as excess procreation, include abortion and infant neglect and abandonment and parental irresponsibility (free riding). *Ritualistic reactions* may involve joining spiritual groups, which promise respite to reproductive problems such as infertility, and some of which stress segregated, unequal, gender roles. Meanwhile *rebellion* is signalled by the occasional, would-be feminist, who may shave her head, deplore marriage and postpone or minimize or completely avoid parenthood. While legitimate innovation and socially acceptable, coping strategies may help to transform problematic parental situations and make them manageable, illicit innovations (such as male free riding and infant neglect) are certain to add to the ambiguity, anomie and suffering involved, as the population continues on its still high fertility trajectory.

Customary Features of Family Systems

Customary (colonial) paradigms of organization and domestic management of biological and social reproduction and the mechanisms which used to serve to promote sustainability and security at the local and household levels have been well described in now classic anthropological works carried out in the thirties, forties and fifties (Fortes 1938, 1945, 1948, 1949a, b; Goody 1954, 1956). Subsequently a number of multi-method studies, in the 1960s and seventies provided an approach for considering family conflict, and individual tension, strain and innovation or deviance, linked to social and spatial mobility (education, migration and employment) on the one hand, and reproductive deviance or innovation on the other.[1] Subsequently

1. See for example Oppong 1974a, c, 1975a, 1976, 1977a, b, c, 1978, 1987, Oppong and Bleek 1982, Oppong and Abu 1987.

demographic data from the three rounds of the Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys (GDHS), have furnished findings on more recent family life outcomes. These provide evidence on fertility change, residential and marriage patterns, and the widespread lack of clarity of family arrangements, on child mortality, undernutrition and morbidity during the late eighties and nineties.

In the precolonial and early colonial systems individual conjugal roles and relations were characterized as segregated; sibling ties as solidary and parento-filial ties as diffuse, since children had multiple maternal and paternal figures and vice versa (as well as the frequency of fostering (e.g., Oppong 1973). The conjugal family of a married pair and their biological offspring was not typically closed (or separated off forming a monopoly for control and enjoyment of any resources) for any purposes (e.g., residence, sex, procreation, property holding, management or transmission or division of labour). It was the wider descent group (however reckoned and at whatever level of segmentation), which was likely to form the bounded or closed grouping, within which responsibilities were shared and assets (human and material) were held in common, used, enjoyed and passed on.[1] Productive goals and kin cooperation and solidarity were achieved through promotion of various combinations of family based enterprises (farm and off farm), with estates held in common and administered and inherited by segments of descent groups, with appropriate authority structures. Reproductive, child survival and development goals, as well as female ability to combine production and reproduction over the life cycle, were achieved through polygyny; strict and often lengthy, birth spacing (achieved through sexual abstinence after birth by new mothers for several months or years); child fostering, quite prevalent in some societies; a marked gap in male/female marriage ages; different patterns of female coresidence over the life cycle etc.. Polygyny facilitated wifely autonomy and comparative independence, while lowering the domestic workload through sharing.[2] Indeed Ghana has long been notable for the frequently separate residence of spouses (among the Ga and Akan) and the autonomous functioning of wives in productive activities.[3] As in the rest of the sub-region, high fertility and high female contributions to production were safeguarded by the strict, birth spacing rules and mechanisms and the close, kin cooperation, permitting the flexibility of work schedules for young mothers and their intimate supervision and support by several female kin and affines.[4]

1. The practice of widow inheritance provides a good example of this.

2. Boserup (1970) noticed how polygyny in SSA may be preferred by women as marriage is onerous.

3. See Boserup (1970:62–3). In a table on women who are farming on their own account the percentage of own account women farmers in Ghana is 37 per cent the nearest is Liberia with 18 per cent. No other country of those listed worldwide reaches the level of Ghana – 28 countries are listed. The data on women in trade and commerce also show that Ghana stands out. 15 per cent of women were accounted farmers in the sixties. 80 per cent of all traders were female and 94 per cent of female traders were self-employed. These figures were far higher than in other countries (Boserup 1970:88).

4. See Abu's (1994) comparison of different northern culture areas with reference to these dimensions.

Conjugal Jointness/Segregation and Nuclear Openness/Closure

A series of multi-method, micro family studies, carried out over two decades in the nineteen sixties and seventies in urban and rural areas of Ghana, among educated and illiterate people in several ethnic groups and culture areas, attempted to document impacts of the increasing social and spatial mobility of the population on some of these well documented, traditional aspects of family systems and also the continuity of difference between patrilineal and matrilineal descent systems. These studies identified three basic and salient dimensions of family functioning (prominent in both actors' perceptions and contemporary sociologists' theorizing). These were documented and compared and their associations with gendered tension, conflict and change delineated. They were the *jointness* or *segregation* of conjugal role relationships in several domains of domestic norms and action (financial management, chore performance, child care, leisure spending etc.) and degrees of *openness/closure* of the conjugal family as regards these domains plus sex and procreation. Particular combinations of degrees of *openness* and *jointness* in different activity domains were found to be tense, unstable and prone to change. For example economically it was difficult to promote conjugal jointness of assets and financial management in a continuing open situation in which spouses retained close economic links with kin. Levels of social and spatial mobility, in terms of migration and generations of education, appeared to be linked both to changing normative prescriptions and expectations regarding kinship and marriage and different behaviours regarding familial resource allocations. The third dimension was conjugal resources, power and decision making (Oppong 1970).

With respect to the dimensions of familial roles defined above, there was clearly considerable tension and conflict between many husbands and wives and their respective kin about the extent to which the conjugal family should be a *closed* or *open* system for coresidence (living in relatives/ in-laws); sex (polycoity); procreation (polygyny); infant and child care (and domestic work fostering of children by non-parental kin and infant care by kin or maids); cash and property holding management and inheritance (Oppong 1974a). Individuals preferred degrees of *closure* in different domains to suit their own particular goals and resources. Moreover commitment to *closure* in a particular sphere at the normative level might not be matched by action for one reason or another.[1] Given the earlier traditional context of kin support and cooperation in child care, and the persistent expectations of full time occupations, mothers bereft of such security were observed to suffer anxieties and

1. For example a professional man married in church and under the monogamous marriage ordinance might find himself declining into polygyny, following his girl friend's delivery of his child, while a mother committed to care for her own children might find her financial pressures and occupational demands forcing her to admit unrelated, under age, nurse maids into her home, resulting in her infants being fed or under fed in ways contrary to their own (educated) mothers' preferences and prescriptions.

problems. Furthermore migration could lead to new insecurities, as well as to possibilities for legitimate (adoption of modern contraception) or illegitimate innovation, (e.g., abortion)[1] linked to changing attitudes and practices regarding procreation and child care.

Analysis of prescribed norms among the educated youth provided evidence of much variation and lack of consensus on most issues between males and females and changes with increasing generations of education, which were in turn linked to changing orientations to family size (Oppong 1975a, b, 1977c). Meanwhile matrilineal expectations tended to persist and to be associated with greater segregation of roles among Akan spouses (Oppong 1974a, b, 1975c). An important observation was that in some respects spatial and social mobility (modernization – incipient signs of globalization!) were prompting retrograde steps for women, in terms of increasing gender inequality and decreasing capacity to cope simultaneously with productive and reproductive demands (Oppong et al. 1975 and Oppong 1977c 1982). Both trends towards nuclear *family closure*, in terms of less kin support for domestic responsibilities and infant and child care, and persistent *segregation* in terms of male lack of entry into the domestic and child rearing domain,[2] were seen to pose problems for educated women, as they attempted to fulfill the customary ideals of Ghanaian womanhood – perpetual production and reproduction throughout the reproductive cycle – in new social contexts without traditional levels of social support and solidarity. It became clear that there was not simply a revolutionary shift to *closed* nuclear families with *joint, monogamous, conjugal roles,* as a result of increased social and spatial mobility, and exposure to impacts of European and Christian norms and church and state regulations regarding monogamy, as W. J. Goode and others had tried to predict.

The contribution of this body of work was to demonstrate that these conflicts and their outcomes of resource stress and strain were linked closely to reproductive change both cultural (normative) and behavioural; to both demographic (family size) and contraceptive innovation, in ways which appeared to be both theoretically logical and coherent and rational at the individual level (e.g., Oppong 1978). Individuals, with capacity for action, whose resources were deemed inadequate and who felt strain and anxiety, were more likely to lower their family size desires and adopt contraceptive methods. Meanwhile there were signs that parenthood was increasingly problematic, involving role conflicts, stress and strain (Oppong 1977a).

1. It was a period of heightened discussion about the legitimacy of voluntary surgical abortion.
2. Note that Scott Coltrane found male entry into the domestic domain of activities to be crucial for women's status in the community, in an analysis of data from pre-industrial societies.

Parameters of Economic and Demographic Change

The economic and demographic transformations witnessed during the sixties and seventies further intensified during the last two decades of the millennium, and form the ever changing backdrop for consideration of more recent evidence on parenthood and infancy and its trials. The national context is one in which: energy supplies have been under increasing strain and the proportion using household fuel wood has increased (local production of electricity has plummeted and importation has soared); rural development has been in many places negligible or programmes not infrequently, less than successful (e.g., Kofie 1999). Much of agriculture remains unmechanized, with hand held hoes and cutlasses the major implements in use. Deindustrialization has set in (house building is now a major part of activity categorized as manufacturing). Retrenchment of the public sector has been in vogue and divestiture of state enterprises. Few private sector initiatives have been set up, or apparently successful ones, for one reason or another, have been collapsed. Moreover in spite of upbeat attempts to talk up the situation by international economic advisers, the downward economic slide continued till the end of the millenium, hopefully now halted by the new NPP regime and its fresh policies to alleviate poverty and promote development.

The report of the state of the economy in 2000 (ISSER 2001) described the continuing economic deterioration until the end of the Rawlings NDC regime; attributing this partly to external factors of low commodity prices and high crude oil prices; admitting also the part played by fiscal imbalances and excessive money supply. The economy was characterized by high inflation, high interest rates, rapid depreciation of the cedi and a high debt overhang and a high incidence of poverty (op. cit. p. 1). Earnings for cocoa and gold had fallen. Indeed the production of cocoa was still below the level of output achieved in the 1960s. Agriculture still dominated in terms of contribution to GDP. However despite the economic stress in 2000 – a period when the inflation rate rose from 15 to more than 40 per cent – Ghana successfully underwent a national population and housing census and parliamentary and presidential elections, which showed the world Ghana's solid adherence to democracy and progress in spite of everything.

In 1997 the UNDP Human Development Report for Ghana had concluded that there were many positive features of the health scene, including a rising level of life expectancy putting it above the regional average and even at the top of the list for many countries in the region (57 yrs); increasing numbers of health facilities; a focus on primary health care; improved drug supply and introduction of child health initiatives such as immunization. On the negative side were factors such as high mortality among of under-fives which constitute half of all deaths in the country and dwindling expenditure on public health (excessively high under-five malnutrition was not listed!).

In the case of the escalating rate of migration, in contexts of increasing impoverishment, landlessness and underemployment, the mobility of females and males has continued to dislocate the traditional gender divisions of labour and responsibilities, in which women were already historically remarkable for their high levels of autonomy and agricultural productivity in a context of enduring high fertility. Now female labour burdens both on and off farms are often even greater than ever and women's autonomy often even more exaggerated than before.[1] Moreover mothers increasingly lack those traditional solidarities and supports, from kin, husband and children, which made simultaneous high levels of reproduction and production possible.[2]

Mobility

Certain changing statistics provide the overall parameters of the speed of demographic transformations ongoing during the period. The rapid rate of rural-urban movement is attested by the speed of urbanization, which continues at a very fast rate in Ghana, as elsewhere in the region (percent urban – 29 per cent in 1970; 36 per cent in 1995 and an estimated 48 per cent in 2015). However movement is not all towards urban areas nor is it necessarily predominantly or even half male. In the past male rural urban migration left a predominance of females in some rural areas as in the rest of the region, with serious implications for agricultural labour and women's part in it. But women are now also increasingly mobile and at least one analysis has shown that in the late eighties to nineties there were more female than male migrants and the majority were in agricultural related activities (Canagarajah and Thomas 1997). Autonomous female migration may even outnumber associational migration. More younger females are moving longer distances and going directly to Accra compared to thirty years ago (e.g., Seljflot 1999). Clearly each decade has its own unique patterns of movement linked to prospects and opportunities for jobs and incomes. A cumulative change appears to be the rising ability and propensity of younger, single women (the ones likely soon to be mothers) to move alone or with friends. There is also increased evidence of children travelling without parents, phenomena unheard of a generation before.

Gendered Labour Divisions

Already at the beginning of the last decade it was suggested that structural adjustment policies in Africa in the context of free market policies were having potentially profound effects on the lives of women and girls in Ghana and elsewhere: influenc-

1. E.g., recent work of Fayorsey (1993 and 1995) on Ga mothers.

2. Blanc and Lloyd (1990) using data from the GDHS 1988 and the GFS 1979/80 were still writing of the remarkable equilibrium between female productive and reproductive roles and the utility of traditional mechanisms such as fostering in maintaining this apparent equilibrium.

ing their health, income, employment, working conditions, access to resources, marital status, family relationships, mental health, time use, migration decisions, access to public services and their understanding of their roles and opportunities in life (Sparr 1994:20–21). A major trend noticed in Ghana and elsewhere from the early eighties onward was an increase in female workloads to compensate for the drop in earnings of men who were present and for the absence of men. At the same time that the need for income and employment rose, both men and women suffered unemployment through retrenchment. At the same time working conditions deteriorated with consequences for women's well being and family welfare (Manuh 1994).

Long standing patterns of family based and self-employment in agriculture and retail trade still persist to some extent and, even if in transformed ways at the present time. For surveys in the nineties indicated that more than a third of women were working unpaid in rural areas; nearly one in five were engaged in traditional work for cash away from home; nearly a third in urban, unpaid family labour or traditional cash work at home and less than 5 per cent in modern wage or salaried employment (GDHS 1993).[1]

Reproduction: Fertility Decline Mechanisms

Individual triggers and family level mechanisms whereby fertility began to decline, in particular, for socially and spatially mobile categories of people in the seventies has already been noted. This process has continued. There is evidence from Ghana and a number of other countries in the region that fertility is now markedly less high than two to three decades ago. (This is in a context of static or even rising fertility, documented in more than ten countries in the region.) Fertility has declined dramatically by two births over the past two decades from six and a half births per woman in 1980 to 4.6 births in the last 5 years. The differences are most stark between Greater Accra (2.7 births per woman) and the rest of the country especially the North, where the average is 7 births per woman. Recent micro analysis has demonstrated how fertility change is occurring in a socio-economically and geographically distinct manner, with quite contrasting patterns for elite and non-elite populations and with contrary signs of increasing tempo of births among certain categories, such as teenagers, in certain places and at particular points in time (Agyei-Mensah and Aase 1998). These changes are occurring as traditional, effective and strictly monitored, spacing practices (sexual abstinence after birth) fall into abeyance and new contraceptive choices are or are not taken up.

At the national level factors perceived as linked to the lowering of fertility are several. They include the persistence of reproductive traditions (nearly one in three women over 20 years still reports using lactational amenorrhea and post-partum

1. See the analysis by Lloyd and Blanc in Adepoju and Oppong (eds) 1994.

abstinence to space births and one in five or more use periodic abstinence and withdrawal). They include innovation or deviance, in terms of a retreat from marriage by the young and old, leading to the decline in the percentage of women married, especially among the youngest women (15–29) and the oldest (40–49) (GDHS 1998). There has been a decline in early teen marriage and a steady rise in the average age at marriage (from 18 to 19).[1] There is also uptake of modern contraception. Thirty to forty percent of married women of all age groups report they have used modern methods at some time though only 13.3 per cent report current use. This contrasts with male reports that 27 per cent of urban men are currently using modern contraceptives and 16.9 per cent of rural men (ibid. p. 47). This might appear contrary to popular perceptions that it is men who fail to respond to calls for Family Planning! Meanwhile the evidence from the most recent GDHS (1998) of high levels of "early pregnancy loss" and "stillbirths" among girls (15–24) and middle aged women (45–49), a pattern particularly marked for urban teenage girls, supports the contention, based on an earlier, small, in depth study, that abortion may be perceived as a more ready, even less harmful (!), though deviant, means of birth planning than modern contraceptives (Oppong and Abu 1987 see also Ahiadeke 2001).

Under-Fives: Malnutrition and Mortality in Perspective

The final focus is infant and toddler hunger and death. Why are these not decreasing in the region in general and in Ghana in particular, as fast as they are in some other parts of the world, especially in contexts where national food deficits are recorded as going down? Furthermore why does household asset holding and therefore wealth, not have such a marked positive impact on these phenomena as it does elsewhere and what if anything is the relevance of the points presented pertaining to family and gender systems? As Table 1 graphically demonstrates under-nutrition of infants and toddlers under three in Ghana is not only too common – threatening the development and well being of the nation's population – it is too much in evidence among all social classes, including the non-poor.

In the mid-nineties analysis of the evidence from more than one thousand eight hundred babies 0–35 months, collected in the 1993 GDHS, demonstrated clearly that under-nutrition was one of the most important health and welfare problems among infants and young children in Ghana (Macro 1995a,b). About a quarter of the infants were chronically under-nourished and too short for their age – stunted. More than a quarter were underweight and 12 per cent were wasted (an increase on the 1988 figure). Chronic malnutrition was found to begin very early in life and increase rapidly until by 21 months nearly half of the children were stunted. The proportion underweight rose rapidly till 12 months when it reached about 40 per

1. Median age at first intercourse has not changed much in two decades (17.6).

Table 1. GHANA:
Infant and Maternal Under Nutrition, Health Care, Population and Poverty Asset Quintiles

HNP Indicator	Poorest	Second Poor	Middle Less Poor	Fourth Non-Poor	Richest	Population Average
% Children stunted (a)	35.3	29.1	27.9	22.8	12.6	25.9
% Children underweight (moderate and severe) (b)	43.6	42.3	44.3	27.4	14.5	35.2
Mother's BMI %<18.5	11.3	14.8	13.8	12.1	7.2	12.1
TFR	6.7	6	5.6	4.7	3.4	5.2
% use modern contraception	F. 5.4 M. 6.1	F. 5.3 M.11.8	F. 7.7 M. 17.8	F. 12.1 M. 27.0	F. 19.1 M. 32.7	F. 10.1 M. 19.9
Antenatal care by health personnel	75.8	78.7	83.9	95.0	97.3	85.6
Delivery by health worker	25.3	23.8	31.7	62.4	85.1	43.7

Source: Gwatkin et al. (2000)

(a) Stunted = below 2 sd z score height for age – children under 3 years;
(b) Underweight = below 3 or 3 sd z score weight for age children under 3;
BMI = Body Mass Index;
TFR = Births per woman age 15–49.

cent and remained that high through the second and third years. Wasting was also found to increase rapidly and peak at 23 months when almost 30 per cent were affected. This proportion was much higher than in 1988. Liquids and solids were found to be introduced too early to infants, contrary to WHO recommendations of exclusive breast feeding for 4–6 months. Only 8 per cent of babies under 4 months were breast fed (in 1988 it had been 2 per cent!). 40 per cent of babies under 4 months were given food – not a recommended practice. The report concluded that the failure to breast feed exclusively for 4–6 months accounted for the increase in under-nutrition among young infants. Bottle feeding was practised in a quarter of cases with babies under 4 months. (The proportion had dropped by half since 1988 but Ghana still had the third highest percentage among all African countries surveyed – only Nigeria and Namibia had higher levels.) Furthermore while WHO recommends introduction of solid foods after 6 months, fewer than forty percent of babies 6–9 months were fed on breast milk and solid foods (making Ghana the country furthest away from WHO recommendations). Signs of malnutrition were worst in the rural areas and in the northern regions and lowest in Accra, but even there it had worsened since 1988. Though the situation was better among babies of educated mothers, 10 per cent or more of infants of mothers with higher education were still underweight or stunted. Even among households using tap water 10–20

per cent of infants were stunted. Diarrhoeal prevalence appeared to be lower by a half than in 1988 but the picture for infant malnutrition did not mirror this drop.[1]

The conclusion of the study was that infant and child feeding practices were far from optimal, resulting in high levels of under-nutrition from age three months onwards. Significantly multivariate analysis showed that factors reflecting a household's economic status, such as parental education and occupation, possession score, type of transport owned, religious denomination and the number of children at home, were not significant or consistent predictors of under-nutrition. In fact children of women with the highest possession scores had 50 per cent higher risk of being underweight! (Macro 1995a:xiv). The report noted this finding with surprise and surmised that possibly it was because these mothers work outside the home for money and have less time for child care (op. cit. p. 41). The risks of wasting also almost doubled when the mother was in her thirties – the analysts surmised that older mothers are more likely to have several children and less time for child care, remarking "they frequently leave children in the care of siblings who are only slightly older" (p. 42).

The trends documented in several rounds of WFS and GDHS in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Office 1997) have provided evidence of increases in wasting/stunting among some population segments, and the Ghana Living Standards Surveys (GLSS) findings have also indicated that it is not simply level of poverty which is implicated, in view of the fact that parents in the fifth quintile of income may have lower than average child nutrition outcomes, and also the fact demonstrated in the trends report, that there was at one point in time an increase in stunting of children of mothers with higher education.

Nor does it appear to be simply demographic trends, as in actual fact a number of current demographic changes should augur well for infant health and development in Ghana, both persistence of traditions and innovations. These include the facts that median age at first birth has risen slightly from nearly twenty to nearly twenty one in the past two decades (GDHS 1998). The percentage of first births to girls before 18 years has fallen to 22 per cent. Meanwhile traditional long birth intervals persist, with half of all births occurring more than three years after the previous birth. Indeed the median birth interval has increased slightly in the past few years from 36 months in 1993 to 38 months in 1998.[2] Only about 1 in 10 births occur after a short birth interval of less than 2 years.

1. Note that for comparative purposes nutritional status was determined using the International reference population defined by the US National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS standard) as recommended by the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control (Macro 1995a, b). Studies are currently underway in several countries to assess whether the measurements used need to be adapted to global conditions.

2. The median duration of amenorrhoea is 11 months and of abstinence 9 months.

However there are the other facts related to mother care and already indicated, which run quite counter to the best advice on infant well being. These include the fact that exclusive breast feeding is not common now in Ghana, even after the apparent improvements of the past few years (GDHS 1999). Even up to one month of age only 43 per cent of babies are exclusively breast fed and this percentage drops rapidly with age to one in four children aged 4–5 months. Supplements are introduced at a very early age, a pattern significantly demonstrated to be more common among mothers with high workloads and high contributions to subsistence (cf. Nerlove 1974 with an analysis of preindustrial societies).

Indeed bottle feeding up to 4 months still occurs in Ghana in 24 per cent of cases, though it is negligible in most African countries.[1] Ten years ago an assessment of the status of breast feeding in Ghana (Snow 1993) had found that Ghana had one of the lowest percentages of exclusively breast fed children (2 per cent) but one of the highest percentages of children breast fed for a year (94 per cent).[2] Optimal breast feeding was nearly non-existent and was inhibited by delayed initiation of breast feeding, as well as early introduction of water and the consideration that breast feeding itself is only supplemental. Support services for lactation were poor. Accordingly Ghana received only 49 out of 140 points on the Breastfeeding Situational Analysis Score Sheet. Recommendations and active improvements in the formal system followed.[3]

A number of small studies of infant feeding were carried out in the nineties. A study in a rural, northern Ghanaian community in the Upper East, with levels of malnutrition much higher than the national averages, has shown that children are often weaned abruptly onto adult foods. In that case cooking only occurred once a day, with leftovers eaten for breakfast and children often privileged if they had lunch of ground raw cereals soaked in water with leftovers, shea butter or fresh raw groundnuts. Seasonal food insecurity was common (Armar Klemesu et al. 2000). Recently attempts have been made to measure and compare the amount of care infants and toddlers receive in an urban African context. One such study has been

1. Except for Kenya 16.4; Cameroun 17.8 per cent; Nigeria 33.6 per cent and Namibia 40.1 per cent.
2. Babies are much more likely to be given cows' milk in different forms when their mothers have education – especially secondary education – in this and older age groups. Other babies may just be given variants of cereal porridges in their bottles.
3. It was recommended as a result of this analysis that midwives and traditional birth attendants should be trained to promote breast feeding, that an appropriate programme be developed to promote optimal breast feeding, that all health workers should be trained to promote optimal breast feeding, that a breast feeding policy be developed (including a code for the marketing of breast milk substitutes and provisions for maternity leave), that hospital practices change, that IEC programmes take place, and that research be undertaken to determine how to promote exclusive breast feeding and determine the causes of high maternal malnutrition and anaemia. Many changes have in fact been introduced, including baby friendly hospital practices etc.

carried out in Accra (Armar Klemesu et al. 2000).[1] Another study in Techiman (Lartey et al. 2000) indicated that maternal education was positively associated with growth during most of the age intervals studied between one and eighteen months. The comparatively high levels of educated mothers unemployed will need further examination in this regard. Their suprising levels of unemployment may be linked to the better development of their infants.

Clearly evidence on child fostering, and how this customary practice is being adapted to modern settings, and the extent of fathers' (and mothers') absence during children's crucial periods of development need study, as well as impacts of escalating maternal workloads and implications of different types of child-care regimes and substitution patterns of care-taking.[2] There is need to examine factors affecting maternal/paternal /other caretakers' time available or allocated for the time-consuming job of child weaning and possible impacts of women's (increasing burdens of agricultural and subsistence) work. Problems encountered by working mothers of nursing infants in Accra have been recently catalogued: lack of maternity leave, distant separation of work and home, lack of workplace crèches and unsympathetic employers. Different coping strategies are adopted and mothers often suffer role conflict, stress and strain (Nti et al. 1999). So much for the recent and current dimensions of the problem.

Historical evidence and observation indicates that the problem of infant hunger and under-nutrition is a recent and contemporary one (Rijpma 1996 and in press). Moreover Rijpma argues as we do, that it appears to be linked inextricably with the disruptions in gender roles and relations described and ongoing. As we have argued the problem has assumed the form of an infant fall from grace and radical loss of entitlements (Oppong 1999); a pattern noted as part of a global *parenting deficit* suffered by infants and children worldwide (Oppong 2000); and argued to be common in the region – involving a disruption in mother care – and devastating in its consequences, both for the present and future (Oppong 2001). The disruption of gender roles and relations and mothercare, the parenting deficit and dislocation of marriage, kinship and domestic organization are viewed as dimensions of globalizing processes, linked to feminization of poverty, feminization of agriculture and feminization of labour. And these are processes even more marked in Ghana than in many other countries in the region.

Mothers of infants tend to have to work harder than ever before with less and less family support and protection as male labour is increasingly unable to provide

1. Care indices were created: (1) a child feeding index (2) a preventive health seeking index and (3) a hygiene index – the first two based on maternal recall the last based on spot check observations.

2. The work of Bledsoe elsewhere in the sub-region has clearly shown how birth context and status in a family affect parental orientations and caring behaviours.

for family members and the family status of the spouse and siblings and offspring have dwindling support to offer.

Kwashiorkor in the Gold Coast

The first complete clinical description of under-five malnutrition in tropical Africa is said to date from 1932.[1] The cause of the disease was presumed to be an abnormal diet, breast feeding by a pregnant mother or an old woman and insufficient weaning food – maize. The period of breast feeding was assumed to be truncated (Williams 1933). African women were considered to be ignorant as regards nutrition, though they knew what *kwashiorkor* meant (!) (ibid). The medical treatment offered was cod liver oil, malt and tinned milk. Unfortunately children who appeared to be recovering later died when they left hospital. In 1935 Williams had counted 60 cases in three years and five years later probably less than half had survived. During the following three decades it was blamed for serious and widespread nutritional disorder (Brock and Autret 1952) and 50 per cent of under-five mortality in many areas (Davidson et al. 1979). Then in the eighties UNICEF (1985) warned of a malnutrition so grave that it was claiming the lives of millions of African children annually. [2] As Rijpma (1996) has noted this was no longer a problem of primary malnutrition but a "structural catastrophe", which he equates with the situation of children in the Industrial Revolution in Europe (from about 1760), an analogous deficiency disease which existed among European children – *Mehlnahrschaden*.

In research reviewing nearly a hundred printed works by more than 60 medical doctors who worked in Africa before 1880, Rijpma (1996) searched for symptoms of child malnutrition. His findings were that in the nineteenth century only a few African children were observed with one to three symptoms of *kwashiorkor* by 5 out of 64 doctors. He argues that this indicates a low incidence of malnutrition in children and only in the presence of aggravating circumstances such as foreign influences and/or war.[3] Many migrations were gradual and did not lead to structural disorganization. Generally the African children were described as being healthy except in areas under European control. Some symptoms of malnutrition, abnormal mortality among children and starvation were observed in regions where foreign

1. In a medical report on the then Gold Coast, now Ghana (Williams 1931/2). Williams (1933) described a condition she found in children between 6 months and four years of age. It was characterized by irritability, diarrhoea, swelling of hands and feet and changes of the skin and hair and enlargement of the abdomen. It was first labelled deficiency diseases and then nutritional disease and *kwashiorkor* and malnutrition and described as a lethal condition unless treated very early (Williams 1935 and 1938). (She used the term kwashiorkor a Ga word to mean the disease the deposed baby gets when the next one is born.)
2. See UNICEF Accra (1987) on policies and programmes to protect children.
3. Wars were observed to bring new diseases and spread old ones. Fortunately wars were mostly local and temporary except the ones started by or on behalf of European, Arab or African slave dealers. Starving people were found where slavers were active. Wars and droughts led to hunger but even then people did not lose their customs or knowledge of how and where to procure food.

influence had caused disturbances. His conclusion was that till the end of the nineteenth century birth spacing was in place in tropical Africa. Births were well spaced and mortality low. This historical overview by Rijpma (1996) points to the fact that malnutrition increased during the twentieth century and so he asks why the disturbance of traditional infant breast feeding and weaning became widespread. He points to the impact of colonialism; the dislocation of peoples; conflict; introduction of new diseases; the impacts of law and religion which disrupted traditions shaping sexual behaviour, procreation and gender relations. Productive and reproductive relations were disrupted.

> Women had to work harder than ever. Forced labour and migrations resulted in loss of men in agriculture which enlarged women's work loads. Protracted breast feeding and the contraceptive effects of lactation disappeared .
>
> Taxation forced the producers to grow cash crops which resulted in a smaller area and less time for their own food. Others had to leave their fertile areas which were made into plantations or game reserves. Long existing ecological systems of farming, husbandry, fishing , hunting and gathering, became unbalanced when large numbers of men had gone. New laws forbade the Africans to fish and to hunt in many areas, while herds of cattle had to be reduced, They had lost all political control. The changes in food production, as the adoption of crops that needed less labour led to nutritional disbalances, explain the insufficient spectrum of weaning foods. It was not the maize that caused malnutrition, as it was a staple food since the seventeenth century: a failing innovation would have been discontinued by the Africans themselves. But maize only was not enough.
>
> In the second half of the twentieth century development aid brought new disturbances. "Ignorant" African farmers are instructed how and what to cultivate, with a focus on men, even in female farming systems, fertile subsistence – farming areas are still being alienated for cash crop production, helped by the change from indigenous to European legal systems, industries are subsidized which attract labour from agricultural areas. (Rijpmaa 1996:60–61)

So the historical analysis of the medical evidence draws the conclusion that between 1596 and 1880 there was only secondary malnutrition in areas of the region under foreign influence. It escalated rapidly however after that period and especially in the twentieth century, because of the colonial impact on African traditions shaping procreation and the sexual division of labour.

Thus by 1989 UNICEF was reporting that more African children than ever had "died by the slowing down or the reversal of progress in the developing world". Meanwhile immunization and oral rehydration therapy were felt to have temporarily "saved children's lives". As Rijpma (1996:62) stresses the influence of the few medical doctors working in Africa on malnutrition can only be minimal – it cannot be cured with medicines; birth spacing and sufficient weaning foods are key, as is a better position for the female farmer. Maternal care of the infant is the crux.

It is the contention here that the observed evidence points to the increasing deleterious impacts of globalization on infant care. Gender roles in production and reproduction have been dislocated and mother care has been widely disrupted, with

serious outcomes for infants. Hence the inadequacy of nutritional and medical solutions.

Child Survival or Early Death

There are parallels with regard to the high incidence of early toddler deaths which may also be linked to deficits of care. African babies continue to be worse off than others. For while comparative analysis of childhood mortality rates in much of the developing world showed that despite economic downturns in the 1980s and 1990s, childhood mortality rates continued to decline[1] (Bicego and Ahmad 1997); improvements were less frequent in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in West Africa including Ghana.[2] Much of the persistent high mortality was in the 1–4 years age group, which, as the DHS report noted, is a period when environmental and behavioural factors play key roles in determining the risk of illness or death. This pattern was especially marked in West Africa where the rate of child mortality (1–4 years) relative to infant mortality (0–11 months) was found to be exceedingly high and, as the report emphasized, could not be represented on any existing model life table. Two main areas of enquiry were proposed. These included, first, the development of new model life tables to capture these patterns revealed in the high mortality countries of West Africa and, second, efforts to understand issues underlying high childhood mortality, including research into environmental factors, settlement patterns, utilization of health services and childhood nutrition and feeding practices.[3]

Conclusions: A Crisis in Gender Roles and the Family?

Woman Power: Retrograde Steps in Ghana

But why do these trends of high infant and toddler malnutrition and mortality persist at the present time in Ghana and elsewhere in the (sub) region even among the better off? Why are these trends relatively impervious to improvements and differences in socio-economic status? What does it appear to be in the family and gender systems which allows these patterns to continue and even escalate, among the non-

1. Improvements occurred in a range of countries including Turkey and Morocco, where declines of 40 per cent were documented.
2. Overall under-five mortality remained high, exceeding 150 deaths per 1,000 live births in 7 of 12 countries studied. Op.cit.
3. In fact Bicego and Ahmad (1997) examined some of the risk factors associated with the heightened mortality risk. Short birth intervals and young maternal age were found to be associated with higher risk. Meanwhile mortality at 1–4 years is especially sensitive to socioeconomic factors. The authors suppose this may be due to the impacts of choices regarding nutrition and the use of health services. However subsequent analyses have demonstrated that nutritional status for this age group is not so susceptible to improvements in wealth status (World Bank 1999d). Child mortality is more than three times higher among children of women who have no education than among those whose mothers have secondary or higher education.

poor as well as the poor? What appear to be some of the reasons why Africa and Ghana in particular are different? Why does household asset holding not appear to have such a big impact on infant life quality (survival and development) as it does in Turkey and Latin America and elsewhere? It would seem to be because of a combination of factors, leading to the breakdown of traditional, domestic security systems on the one hand and the widespread failure to develop effective modern, domestic security systems on the other. Kin support for child care (including sibling caretaking) is suffering pervasive weakening, if not in some cases outright collapse. Meanwhile conjugal solidarity and support are frequently lacking or inadequate for the reproductive tasks involved. At the same time a customary feature, female autonomy, is now often exaggerated to excess. One result is that individual women's burdens and responsibilities are too onerous and daunting, affecting their own physical and psychic health as well as their children (e.g., Avotri and Walters 1999).

More than a quarter of a century ago observers were already highlighting the apparently retrograde steps occurring in women's roles as wives, mothers and workers: the changed contexts and locations of activities; the reduction of social support from relatives; the deleterious impacts of unequal access to required modern resources (education, income etc.) and the resulting stress, strain and role conflict (Oppong et al. 1975). Subsequent decades have provided evidence of the continuation and exacerbation of these trends.

Tendencies increasing mothers' insecurity and inability to depend on husbands or kin and therefore pressure to be even more autonomous and continue to work too hard, to provide for themselves and their children during (pregnancy and) lactation include:

a) persistent high levels of polygyny, polycoity and marital fragility – now in a less well regulated and more poverty stricken framework – resulting in more unbridled competition between women and conjugal conflict and even violence;

b) retreat of young men from marriage, (through poverty and irresponsibility and breakdown of customary expectations and sanctions, as well as male aspirations for upward, unburdened movement) and increased rates of divorce/separation and reduced opportunities for remarriage;

c) continuing segregated gender roles and widespread lack of husbands' assistance and cooperation in domestic tasks and infant care now exaggerated by frequent spatial separation;

d) lack of jointly held conjugal assets providing security in marriage;

e) continual material demands from kin, backed by customary and state laws;

f) inadequacy and even total lack of caring assistance from kin and children (through spatial mobility and schooling).

Ghana exhibits to a very high degree the typical picture of women bearing most of the costs of domestic responsibilities and care for the young and old with less resources than men (education, money, land, property etc.). Yet their workloads are simultaneously more and more excessive, as women are reported to complain. Indeed so serious now are the implications for motherhood, that babies are described as having fallen from grace and having lost their familial entitlements to pride of place and continuous loving care (Oppong 1999). Indeed so serious is the evidence of under-nutrition for infants and toddlers in Ghana (and other countries of the region) that the situation has been described as one of a disruption in mother care (Oppong 2001).

This essay has not been a simple attempt to link increasing maternal work and strain with infant outcomes, a task already undertaken in various contexts (cf. Desai et al. 1990). The ecological niches within which infant development takes place have to be taken into account.[1] They are many and varied in Ghana as elsewhere and require study if they are to be understood. In the sixties and seventies a few anthropologists and home scientists were looking at socialization of children and considering the implications of non-maternal care at different ages. Bain (1974) for example observed the rapid turnover of nurse maids in twenty women teachers' households in Accra and the implications for infant attachment and development. More recently Clark (1998) has commented on the different configuration of Asante women's roles and how motherhood is specifically linked to hard work and the expectation that mothers have to struggle to maintain their offspring. These examples show the priority which mothers are compelled to give to occupations in various socio-economic contexts.

Higher education is often touted as a panacea for all the ills of women. In fact potential dilemmas affecting the maternal and occupational roles of highly educated women need special attention, as their conflicts and strains may be particularly acute, given the high levels of responsibility and long hours away from home which professional occupations such as law and medicine entail.[2] Moreover there is interesting evidence from the past series of GDHS data of increases in long term nutritional deprivation of offspring (stunting) of educated women and of a surprising increase in polygynous marriages. These findings run counter to imaginary models

1. See the works of Brofenbrenner and others which call attention to the crucial nature of the ecological niches.

2. Dilemmas, conflicts and strains of nurses and teachers were already documented in detail in the seventies see Oppong 1977d. Currently a study of female doctors and nurses in Korle Bu, the main teaching Hospital in Accra, is demonstrating the acute conflicts and strain of unsupported mothers (M Phil thesis in progress).

of educated women being able to provide well for their children and having modern, monogamous marriages! They lead to the posing of serious questions, such as how the strains and stresses regarding family and work conflicts are linked to these unexpected negative results regarding educated women and child development. As noted recent positive associations between maternal education and child health and development may need to be viewed in the context of current levels of female educated unemployment.

In the case of rural mothers and farmers there would seem to be a pressing need to promote field studies which examine the simultaneous productive and reproductive roles of women – including on the one hand impacts of heavy work loads on maternal mortality and morbidity, low birth weights, weaning practices etc. and on the other hand impacts of women's reproductive activities and constraints on their farming work. There is a lack of integrated data sets which examine productive and reproductive activities and responsibilities simultaneously (a gendering of the data) and yet the policy implications of this simultaneity for both economic and demographic outcomes are profound (Oppong 1991; 1997a, b).

As in Moore (1994) in her examination of the question as to whether there is a crisis in the family, the care of infants and the reproduction of human capital have been identified as the main issues to be addressed, when focusing on the state of families and how they have been altering over recent decades in the pervasive contexts of globalizing processes. Like her we have viewed the unprecedented scale of labour migration, urbanization, and feminization of labour and pauperization as crucial (eschewing any attempt to classify particular family forms or to identify the composition of certain types of domestic groups). Rather there has been a focus on potentially comparable and varying dimensions of gender roles in familial contexts (male/female parent; sibling; offspring; husband/wife) and in situations of increasing inequality and resource strain and stress (time and material resources). As in Moore the rising domestic separation of females and males and the escalating inequalities in responsibilities for social reproduction have been identified as key trends, impacting child development and nutritional status and mothers' well being. But we have not only identified problems among the poor. We have demonstrated that the configuration of familial relationships and resources (and community and state institutions), which leave new mothers increasingly unsupported and insecure, lacking responsible others on whom they can depend, means that, at all levels of assets and income, mothers may find themselves unable to focus the time and attention required on the new born and vulnerable weanlings. Certainly the time available and attention of other potential caretakers is dwindling (including that of school age children).

Thus this paper incidentally contributes to academic debates and assertions that economic and demographic analyses of development and social welfare, as well as of health, survival and nutrition, need to pay more attention to the gendered rela-

tionships of co-parenthood and the conflicts generated over the organization of social reproduction (Folbre 1994). Indeed the case of Ghana provides an important example of how gender issues and changing family systems, affecting the cultures of procreation and infant care, mold outcomes in terms of infant quantity and quality. It also indicates how much current gender rhetoric and so called policy analysis, such as that concerned to increase female contributions to economic development, *to attach female shoulders more closely to the wheels of development* and improve their economic efficiency, may be playing to the tune of the harbingers of market forces and not geared to the imperatives of sustainable human development.

This discussion continues a theme, pervasive in our earlier work: the examination of evidence of national level impacts of economic and demographic transformation, on individual social and spatial mobility and family relationships and systems and how these are linked to reproductive change.[1] An underlying aim is to focus attention on issues requiring further, in depth studies of change processes by future fieldworkers, and to highlight problems which are not merely of theoretical or exotic significance, but which are clearly highly relevant to sustainable human development. Ultimately the focus is change, the evidence of lack of change, as well as evidence of how Ghanaian (and African) family systems in general still continue to differ markedly in a number of ways from those in other regions of the world.

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1. See Oppong in progress (b) in which this work is being synthesized.

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3. Female (In)dependence and Male Dominance in Contemporary Nigerian Families[1]

Bola Udegbe

Introduction

In the last couple of decades of the twentieth century, globalization, which involves to a large extent a restructuring of world society, influenced our daily lives (Hamdani 1997, Lo and Yeung 1996). The effects of global processes are very strong in developing countries, especially in Africa because global effects arising largely from attempts to integrate African countries into the world trade system have been based on unfavorable terms in which they become dependent on the West. Further, African countries, like other developing nations, are also subject to international policies, which impact directly or indirectly on the economic, political and social lives of the people. For example, there are several international policies and conventions on women and children. While it is noted that globalization is not unidirectional and even in its influence, the effects on African countries are more profound because of their dependence on the West. The household level, as a unit of reproduction, production, consumption and socialization is the sensitive point of intervention for change, where the real effects of macro-levels can be assessed (Acero 1991). Thus, gender relations and stereotypes which influence macro-level policies are negotiated at the household and family level through the flow and allocation of resources, level of consumption, labor participation and the capacity to meet family members' needs.

This paper examines gender relations in contemporary Nigerian families from the perspective of female independence/dependence and male dominance. Although a longitudinal research provides a comparative picture of the changes in family relations over time, this research is aimed at contributing to discussions of global processes by examining contemporary trends. Using survey data from a larger study of male responsibility in three distinct Hausa, Igbo and Yourba speaking areas of Nigeria, issues of dominance and patriarchy were examined from the respondents' marriage patterns, income generating activities, gender relations and views about women. The questions addressed in this paper included the following:

1. The data for this research is part of a larger Study of Male Responsibility of the Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Network, University College Hospital, Ibadan, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

- What is the nature of gender relations in contemporary Nigeria?
- What are the current gender and family relations in Nigeria especially with regard to marriage patterns, husband/wife relations and patriarchy?
- What is the impact of this on Nigerian family settings?
- What changes (if any) do we observe as the impact of globalization on relations between gender?
- Are there differences due to ethnicity? Are these changes disappearing in favor of differentiation by class and urban/rural differences?

Influenced largely by the global feminist discourse and agenda, my interest in examining gender relations stems from the need to make a positive impact in ensuring gender equity in different aspects of the social and economic lives of women. I have attempted to document experiences of discrimination of women in Nigerian work settings, social and political spheres and the link between gender attitudes and gender discrimination. In an attempt to understand the links I have examined gender relations, stereotypes and attitudes and also sought ways of increasing awareness to the subtle but strong discrimination of women in work settings through discriminatory organizational health and family policies. This paper therefore is an attempt to further shed more light on women's experiences of (in)dependence in relation to male dominance in the Nigerian setting. No doubt this has implications for the place of women in Africa in the twenty-first century, in relation to their counterparts in other parts of the world.

Literature review

Although early writings on African women by colonialists, anthropologists and missionaries saw African women as chattels, downtrodden slaves and beasts of burden, recent writings by many feminists have debunked many of these assertions (e.g., Oyewumi 1997, Sofola 1998). While many of the feminist writings on African women differ in their perception of the gender inequity perceived in African societies, three somewhat related schools of thought can be observed in the literature. First, some writings have emphasized that African systems are patriarchal in that there exist (since the pre-colonial period) forms of oppression that keep women in subordinate positions relative to men (e.g., Afonja 1990, Aina 1998). For example, widowhood practices, arranged marriages, circumcision, inheritance rights and polygyny all constitute forms of oppression against women. Indeed, there are regional African bodies and feminist groups dedicated to removing some of these traditional harmful practices.

Some writings on the other hand, have stressed that pre-capitalist societies did not impute values into the natural act of discriminating phenomena and that gender was completely irrelevant. This second group of writings has questioned our lenses

for observing the African culture in that many African women's experiences may indeed be perceived as sources of power and independence for women. However, when seen through the Western lenses, these experiences may be interpreted as disempowering. Amadiume (Amadiume 1995) gave the example of the mothering role of women in the Igbo culture as empowering because of its spiritual, social and economic implications of what she referred to as mother centered ideology. Sofola (1998) cautions that Western education makes educated Africans, male or female, ill equipped to discuss the African experience. She argued that:

> Quite often, when one hears the Western-educated African woman speak in a demeaning manner about her illiterate, rural, "traditional" counterpart, one cannot help but pity the former for her false sense of importance and delusion of grandeur. It never occurs to her that while she parrots the phrase "what a man can do, a woman can do better", her illiterate counterpart asserts "what a woman can do, a man cannot do". While she quotes the European saying "behind every successful man, there is a woman", her illiterate counterpart affirms: "the strength of a man is his woman" or "a soldier with a mother does not die at the war front". (p.68)

Some of these writings examined the historical perspective to gender relations in which women's access to power has been eroded from the pre-colonial to post period. Some have argued that colonialism, Christianity and Islam brought about negative changes on gender relations in that negative attitudes to women were further entrenched through religious teaching. Furthermore, colonialists adopted a male-dominated educational and political leadership structure that subjugated women. In recent times, with the impact of global recession and the economic problems of many African countries, the introduction of structural adjustment programs has greatly impacted on gender relations. The consequences include increased poverty among women and increased subordination of women. This is because areas of governmental restructuring are consistent with feminine gender roles, thus increasing the burden of coping for women who live in African countries with high levels of debt crisis. Indeed, African and Western feminists' responses to structural adjustment programs have been concerned with alleviating the consequences of economic reforms for gender relations among African women (e.g., Awe 1997).

Some researchers have taken the position that women's situation relative to men is contextual. In many situations, women's level of dependence shifts depending on their status. Among the Igbos, Amadiume (1987) has documented the experiences of 'male daughters and female husbands' in describing changes in the power status of women as wives and daughters. Such experiences are also documented among the Yorubas in which women's status in decision making in their natal families is higher and different from their status as wives (Sudarkasa 1986). Issues of seniority also take precedence over gender in some situations. Indeed, other factors that come into play in determining gender relations include seniority, birth order and

social class, especially in centralized societies. The title of this paper derives from the belief in the contextual nature of women's power and independence in the Nigerian society and in family gender relations.

One of the central issues in gender relations has to do with gender attitudes. How men and women relate in family settings and the potential to maximize family assets for improved quality of life depends on gender relations and attitudes. Gender attitudes have been measured in several ways including:

- Sex role egalitarianism, which involves responding to individuals independently of each sex.
- Reactions to women in non-traditional or non-stereotypical roles.
- Sexist attitudes, attitudes which function to place women in a relatively inferior position relative to males by limiting women's social, political, economic and psychological development.
- Old fashioned sexism (which is blatant and overt) and modern sexism (covert and subtle in expressing sexism) (Swim et al. 1995)
- Neosexism, which stresses the point that to be politically correct, neosexists are under pressure to adopt egalitarian norms. Thus, they claim to make their actions consistent with their professed orientation in a socially acceptable way, but tend to express lack of support for policies designed to enhance the status of women.

Sexism is the endorsement of discriminatory or prejudicial beliefs based on sex. It is typically related to stereotypical conception of the sexes and the endorsement of gender role ideology. Glick and Fiske (1996) argue that sexism is fundamentally ambivalent because it can be both benevolent and hostile. This is because some traditional beliefs are associated with subjective positive feelings and stereotypes about women while some are inherently hostile and patriarchal. They believe that benevolent ideologies serve as balm for the conscience and a way of coercing cooperation from the subordinate groups who get perks for knowing their places. Structural factors underlying the hostile and benevolent sexism are patriarchy, gender differentiation, and sexual reproduction. Benevolent sexism (BS) consists of protective paternalism (e.g., women ought to be rescued first in emergencies), complementary gender differentiation (e.g., women are more pure than men) and heterosexual intimacy (e.g., every man ought to have a woman he adores). Hostile sexism (HS) also addresses power relations, gender differentiation, and sexuality, but the scale has proven to be unidimensional (Glick and Fiske 1996). Both types of sexism are complementary aspects of ambivalent sexism and both are pervasive forms of sexism arising from a ubiquitous aspect of the human condition.

In a cross-cultural study involving sixteen countries, Glick et al. (2000) have shown that men score significantly higher than women on hostile sexism while

women score significantly higher on benevolent sexism. Furthermore, the higher the HS, the higher the BS for men but no significant correlation appeared for the two variables for women. The HS and BS scores for Nigeria and other African countries (Botswana and South Africa) were higher than for many other countries in the West. What this seems to imply is that relative to the West, patriarchal structures are relatively stronger in the sample of African countries. It may also imply stronger acceptance of gender differentiation. The question is what is the nature of these gender relations across Nigeria?

Research Method

This section briefly describes the methodology involved in obtaining the relevant results presented in the next section. A more detailed description of methods is presented by Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network (SSRHRN) (1999). The findings therein are fresh insights and further analysis of the SSRHRN first year data of a large-scale three-year study on gender relations through examining male responsibility in three regions of Nigeria.

Site

The data was collected from three sites in Nigeria: Kaduna, Enugu and Oyo. These locations were selected to represent the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. In each state, one rural and one urban community were selected in order to permit comparison across the rural/urban dimension. In Kaduna state, Zaria (urban) and Wanka (rural) were selected while in Enugu and Oyo states, Awka (urban) and Achalla (rural), and Oyo (urban) and Ikereku (rural) respectively were selected. In each of the communities, the neighborhood and houses visited were randomly selected.

Participants

The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1The total number of study participants in the survey was 1,475. The overall sex distribution was 61.8 per cent male and 38.2 per cent female, which is very close to the target 6:4 figure aimed for. A similar proportion was achieved for each site. Overall mean age was 38.2 years (SD 15.0 years) with an age range of 15 to 90 years. The mean age at each site shows that men were older than women (mean age 40.3 years for men compared with 34.8 years for women).

The sites selected were mainly Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba dominated areas. Therefore consistent with our expectation, ethnic distribution of the survey respondents was: urban north – 99.7 per cent Hausa/Fulani; rural north – 100.0 per cent Hausa/Fulani; urban east – 97.6 per cent Igbo; rural east – 96.4 per cent Igbo; urban west – 99.4 per cent Yoruba; and rural west – 97.3 per cent Yoruba.

Table 1. Sample size, age and sex distribution of participants

		Sample size*			Mean age	
Zone	**Site**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
North	Urban	177 *(60.0)*	118 *(40.0)*	295	40.7	33.6
	Rural	119 *(59.5)*	81 *(40.5)*	200	36.6	28.0
				495 *(33.6)*		
East	Urban	203 *(68.8)*	92 *(31.2)*	295	38.8	32.9
	Rural	122 *(62.9)*	72 *(37.1)*	194	40.2	36.7
				489 *(33.1)*		
West	Urban	186 *(60.4)*	122 *(39.6)*	308	39.6	34.7
	Rural	105 *(57.4)*	78 *(42.6)*	183	48.0	44.2
				491 *(33.3)*		
Grand Total		912 *(61.8)*	563 *(38.2)*	1475 *(100)*	40.3	34.8

* Percentages are in italics and parentheses.

Instrument

This research involved semi-structured in-depth interviews in which a questionnaire schedule consisting of six parts was utilized. The questions contained open and close-ended questions administered by highly trained post-graduate social science students. Sections relevant to our discussions in this paper tapped information such as demographic and family questions (e.g., age, sex, education, marital status), income generating activities, type of marriage, husband/wife relations and recall of proverbs relating to gender relations and attitudes towards women.

Procedure

In each study site, visits and consultations were initially made to obtain permission from community leaders. Thereafter, neighborhoods were identified and mapped. Research assistants were required to be fluent in the local language and carried out at least three interviews per day. Supervision of data collection was carried out at the zonal levels. Data was collected over three months in 1998.

Findings

The findings will be grouped under four broad headings: marriage patterns, husband/wife relations, income-generating activities, gender relations – lessons from proverbs and gender roles.

Marriage Patterns

Table 2 presents the marital status of the respondents in the three zones. The proportion of respondents that are married differed between the sites, being highest in rural west and lowest in urban east. This may be related to the high bride price associated with that area. The proportion of married respondents living together

(mean=88.1 per cent) differs significantly among sites (x^2 =135.18, df=10, p < 0.0001). Although reasons were not given for not living together, it may be related to the growing need to seek employment and business opportunities in urban areas as a result of growing economic hardship. In fact, studies have documented the impact of recession and economic reforms on gender relations in Nigeria (Garba, Akanji and Isiugo-Abanihe 1997).

Table 2. Marital and living status and type of union for respondents

Zone	Site	Marital status*		% of married living with spouse	Type of union			
		Married	Single		Statutory	Customary	Islamic	Cohabitation
North	Urban	258 *(87.8)*	369 *(12.2)*	97.6	0.0	0.0	97.5	0.0
	Rural	172 *(86.4)*	27 *(13.6)*	98.2	1.1	2.7	96.9	0.5
East	Urban	174 *(60.6)*	113 *(39.4)*	86.5	34.1	16.2	0.7	9.3
	Rural	133 *(70.7)*	55 *(29.3)*	83.0	39.8	36.9	0.0	1.8
West	Urban	216 *(70.6)*	90 *(29.4)*	86.9	8.6	54.9	30.3	13.5
	Rural	165 *(90.2)*	18 *(9.8)*	69.8	12.8	14.0	15.8	50.0
Total					15.5	21.8	41.5	11.3

*Percentages are in italics and parentheses.

Table 2 also shows that statutory marriage was more common in the East while Islamic marriage was more common in the North. Customary marriage was also common in the West and the East. The findings reflect the stronger influence of religion in the North than in the South. Further Western influence in the form of English-style statutory weddings was found more in the South and coexisted with traditional forms as reflected in the customary marriage type. Indeed, cohabitation, which is surprisingly high amongst the participants in rural west, is usually a type of customary arrangement because as Zeitlin et al. (1991) observed among the Yorubas, this may range from simple parental consent and blessing to casual and temporary mutual consent. No doubt the type of marriage contracted has implications for gender power relations. With statutory marriage women's rights are better protected in terms of access to family assets in case of divorce or loss of a partner. In addition, they have higher levels of freedom from control of the extended family system (Fadipe 1970). Other types of unions (union by inheritance and concubinage) are very uncommon; the figures for each (overall) are 1.2 per cent and 1.1 per cent respectively, being non-existent in the northern sites and <4 per cent at the other sites.

The levels of Western education attained by the survey respondents are shown in the Table 3. Participants with no formal education were more concentrated in the northern sites than in the south. This is perhaps because Islamic education is still highly relevant and valued in the north. Expectedly, urban areas had more of those with post-secondary education and less of those with no formal education. Urban

east and west had the highest proportions of respondents with post-secondary education while rural north had the lowest proportion. The status of the women in terms of Western education was examined because it has implications for the degree of independence that a woman may enjoy. Previous research has demonstrated the existence of gender discrimination in access to education (e.g., Isiugo-Abanihe 1997) and this pattern was observed in our findings.

Table 3. Percentages of respondents with no formal education and post-secondary education, and sex of household heads

		% with no formal education		% with post-secondary education		Sex of household head	
Zone	**Site**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
North	Urban	43.8	61.8	11.4	2.5	97.6	2.4
	Rural	61.2	86.8	0.9	0.0	99.0	1.0
East	Urban	4.6	8.8	21.7	26.4	82.2	17.8
	Rural	24.0	28.2	7.4	9.9	81.3	18.7
West	Urban	23.1	29.5	19.4	15.6	91.9	8.1
	Rural	37.1	50.0	8.6	2.6	83.1	16.9
Total Sample		29.7	43.4	13.1	9.9	89.5	10.5

It is expected that the higher the disparity between the educational level of a couple the higher the male dominance, assuming that the male partner has the higher level of education. Are there marked differences between the two sexes in their level of education? At each site, men had better education than women. This is a legacy from the colonial period in which there were high levels of gender discrimination in education. As shown in Table 3, a higher proportion of women had no formal education while fewer women had post-secondary education. It is obvious that where women have little or no formal education, the opportunities available to them in terms of occupation or economic activities will be minimal and the level of dominance exerted by their spouses will tend to be higher. It must be noted however that lack of education does not imply lack of power. In fact previous studies have documented the high levels of power and independence of Eastern and Western Nigerian women farmers and traders (e.g., Lloyd 1974). Rather, the point being made here is that Western education provides wider opportunities to maximize women's power.

Who are the heads of households? Table 3 also shows the distribution of male/female headed households across the 3 sites. In general, most households had male heads but rural and urban east, and rural west sites had more than 15 per cent of the total sample's households headed by women. In both rural and urban north, the occurrence of female headed household was relatively lower. This geographical difference that is perhaps associated with marked differences in the impact of religion

has implications for female dependence and male dominance which seems to be higher in the north.

Husband/Wife Relations

Respondents in the pilot study comprising 326 respondents from the 3 sites were asked to indicate whether they discussed several issues with their spouses. A breakdown of their responses across sex is presented in Table 4. Females agreed that they discussed more issues with their spouses than the males did. Results reflect more dependence on the men in terms of decision or consent.

Table 4. Issues discussed with spouses

Issues discussed with spouses			Perception of male responsibility towards wife		
Issues	**Male**	**Female**	**Responsibility**	**Male**	**Female**
				% in agreement	
Money matters	58.1	86.6	Feed his wife	95.2	99.1
Children's education	83.7	93.7	House his wife	77.1	76.9
Health matters	74.0	89.4	Clothe his wife	84.7	87.6
Marriage of the children	47.8	78.9	Meet her sexual needs	48.3	47.7
Work problems	59.6	78.2	Meet her emotional needs	29.3	36.0
Crises	47.3	69.3	Provide for her health needs	54.1	67.0
			Discuss family matters with wife	36.7	51.2
			Own property jointly with wife	20.4	32.1
			Provide companionship	27.9	29.4

Table 4 also shows that expectations of a man's responsibilities towards his wife included feeding, clothing and housing her. Consistent with previous literature which noted that Yoruba husbands and wives do not traditionally pool resources (Fadipe 1970), our findings showed that owning joint property did not receive high acceptance in the total sample. Furthermore, providing companionship and meeting wives' emotional needs did not receive high levels of acceptance by both sexes. This tends to reflect a considerable degree of emotional independence among the women.

Income generating activities

One of the significant indicators of women's independence relates to income. That women in West Africa, like their men, have had independent resources as a result of their roles in the production and distribution networks of their economies has been documented (e.g., Sudarkasa 1981). Such economic activities are continued into old age (Udegbe 1991) To what extent do men and women differ on this variable in this study? 89.8 per cent of males and 88.1 per cent of females indicated they were involved in a primary income generating activity. Are males statistically significant from females in their involvement in these activities? Our results showed that for

the total sample, men and women did not differ (c2 = .343, df=1, p.n.s). This difference across the 3 zones was also not significant except for the north where men and women differed significantly in their reported involvement in primary income generating activities (c2 = 14.2, df=1, p<.001), with more men showing more economic activity. This is not surprising because a large proportion of married women in the villages in the Zaria area are in purdah (Alti-Muazu 1992) and as such direct income generating activities may be curtailed.

Table 5. Participants' involvement in primary and secondary income generation

		Involvement in primary income generation				Involvement in secondary income generation			
Sample		**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	χ^2	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	χ^2
Total	Income	817	496	1313		448	193	641	
	None	93	67	160		462	370	832	
	Total	910	563	1473	.34[a]	910	563	1473	31.6*
North	Income	286	176	462		205	78	383	
	None	9	23	32		90	121	211	
	Total	295	199	494	14.2*	295	199	494	44.6*
East	Income	265	136	401		105	53	158	
	None	59	28	87		219	111	330	
	Total	324	164	488	.10 [a]	324	164	488	.00 [a]
West	Income	266	184	450		138	62	200	
	None	25	16	41		153	138	291	
	Total	291	200	491	.05 [a]	291	200	491	13.2*

df=1 a =not significant, , **= p<.001

Table 5 shows the chi square analysis of gender differences in terms of secondary income generation or second jobs. Our findings also show that across the three zones more men (49.2 per cent) than women (34.3 per cent) were involved in secondary income generating activities (x^2=31.6, df=12, p<.001). One explanation for this is that women's domestic responsibilities reduce their availability for second jobs.

Estimated annual income of the respondents was also compared along gender lines. Although intra-family comparisons of differences in income between husband and wife would provide a better picture, in this paper, male responses were compared with females generally, presented in Table 6.

The income categories, the frequency and cumulative percentages of males and females. Table 7 presents the median income by gender and zone. The results show that men had higher levels of income than women did generally. The gender differences were more marked in the northern zone and less so in the East.

Table 6. Estimated annual income from primary income generating activities

		Male			Female		
Rank	Annual income	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Below N10,000	129	15.8	15.8	231	46.6	46.6
2	10,001-20,000	210	25.7	41.5	142	28.6	75.2
3	20,001-30,000	164	20.1	61.6	52	10.5	85.7
4	30,001-40,000	116	14.2	75.8	22	4.4	90.1
5	40,001-50,000	67	8.2	84.0	7	1.4	91.5
6	50,001-60,000	40	4.9	88.9	8	1.6	93.1
7	60,001-75,000	24	2.9	91.8	3	.6	93.8
8	75,001-100,000	24	2.9	94.7	1	.2	94.0
9	100,001-200,000	6	.7	95.5	0	0	94.0
10	Above 200,000	37	4.5	100.0	30	6.0	100.0
	Total	817	100.00		496	100	

Table 7. Median annual income category across gender and site

Site	Sex	Primary income*	Secondary income*
Total	Male	3.0	2.0
	Female	2.0	1.0
North	Male	3.0	3.0
	Female	1.0	1.0
East	Male	3.0	2.0
	Female	2.0	2.0
West	Male	2.5	1.0
	Female	2.0	1.0

*the median categories correspond to those in Table 3.

Gender relations: Lessons from Proverbs and Gender Roles

Each respondent was asked to cite one common saying or proverb that they were able to recall on women and the responses were content analyzed. The themes reflected fell under 7 categories: characteristics of women, wifehood, motherhood, comparative gender capabilities, women's roles (in the home/family), ties with natal family and old age. The majority (70 per cent) of the proverbs concentrated on the nature of women in general and their roles as wives. The most common theme in these two categories is based on the traditional ideology that good character guarantees a woman's happiness. Related to this is the notion that "character is the charm of a woman". This is based on the belief that a virtuous woman with good character

brings blessings and success to a man (Babatunde 1992). The proverbs also expressed the fear of women by subscribing to the notion that "women are the devil's workshop" in that they are perceived to be avaricious, deceptive, ungrateful and gossips. It is interesting to note that many of the proverbs in this category recognized the potential threat of women's collective resistance to social stability. A third common theme is related to the notions that a wife's role is perceived as complimentary to her husband's. Related to this is the conception that their leadership role can only be circumstantial and women are a weaker sex.

Taken altogether, the mothering role of women seems to be dominant in the proverbs in the form of eulogizing motherhood. These proverbs refer to women's motherhood roles and the fact that they are perceived as the bedrock of their family.

Results show that women emphasized motherhood roles more than men. Furthermore their roles as bedrock and custodian of the family were more emphasized by the women. Women's subordinate/inferior roles were more emphasized by women. (e.g., women are a weaker sex, their place is in the kitchen, they are slaves, ignorant etc.). Also more men than women exhibited fear of women (devil's workshop, deceptive, essential but a problem when many) and a negative attitude to women. Finally, the proverbs reflect both positive and negative perceptions of women (ambivalent sexism), although the negative ones tended to outweigh the positive ones.

Some of the proverbs are situational and prescriptive of the ideal woman. In all, the circumstances that engender positive feelings about a woman are motherhood and as such the achievement of that status is perceived as a great and successful feat that enhances a woman's independence and power status. Also, it appears that a hardworking, humble married woman whose role as custodian of the family and 'helper' to her spouse as evidenced by the man's success is well respected. These proverbs therefore may serve to prescribe culturally acceptable relations between a husband and wife. Indeed there is a distinct gender difference in the pattern of the proverbs: they emphasize more maternal and family roles, which tend though to emphasize differences between the genders, and reinforce the desirable qualities for men.

The trend of findings on the proverbs is again reinforced by other findings obtained in this study. Views about women and gender roles were explored using a number of leading questions. The responses are summarized in Table 8. Only a few men believed that women were trustworthy. This negative attitude was most frequently seen in the western sites and least frequently seen in the eastern sites. Surprisingly, less than two-thirds of women at any site thought women were trustworthy. This also shows that many women hold gender stereotypic dysfunctional attitudes about women. In other words sexism was high in both men and women.

Table 8. Views about women's trustworthiness and dependability

		Male		Female	
Zone	**Site**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Are women trustworthy?					
North	Urban	21.7	76.6	59.3	33.9
	Rural	16.1	83.1	58.2	41.8
East	Urban	42.3	51.2	63.0	35.9
	Rural	34.4	65.6	57.8	40.9
West	Urban	7.1	91.8	30.3	67.2
	Rural	7.6	90.5	59.0	7.7
Are women capable of keeping secrets?					
North	Urban	19.4	78.3	52.5	44.1
	Rural	13.7	85.5	28.2	71.8
East	Urban	35.6	59.1	44.6	55.4
	Rural	25.4	72.1	33.8	64.8
West	Urban	7.1	91.8	28.7	68.9
	Rural	11.4	86.7	60.3	38.5
Are women generally capable of taking rational decisions?					
North	Urban	42.5	56.3	42.2	56.0
	Rural	12.8	84.6	48.1	51.9
East	Urban	60.5	30.3	67.1	27.1
	Rural	69.8	30.2	89.7	10.3
West	Urban	44.4	54.4	54.6	44.5
	Rural	24.0	75.0	59.0	41.0
Can women be trusted to be chaste and sexually upright?					
North	Urban	47.0	46.4	86.1	13.0
	Rural	29.3	67.2	74.7	25.3
East	Urban	29.4	56.9	42.5	48.3
	Rural	9.3	89.8	30.0	68.6
West	Urban	19.3	77.4	41.7	55.0
	Rural	12.5	82.7	68.0	30.8

Table 8 also shows that only a few men thought women were capable of keeping secrets. As seen with the previous question, less than two-thirds of women at each of the sites thought women were capable of keeping secrets as well. On the responses to the questions on the ability of women to take rational decisions and whether they can be trusted to be chaste and sexually upright, the same pattern of responses observed with the previous two questions emerged. A very small proportion of men thought that women were capable of taking rational decisions or were capable of being trusted to be chaste and sexually upright. More women than in the previous questions agreed with the men but the figures are still far from unanimity.

Acceptability of Men Doing Female Occupations and Women Doing Male Occupations

Respondents were asked whether they thought it acceptable for females to engage in male occupations and vice versa. Occupations that were considered exclusively male usually involve heavy physical work such as farming, blacksmithing, carpentry, hunting, palm wine tapping and bricklaying. Technical occupations such as being a mechanic, welder, vulcanizer or radio technician were also considered exclusively male occupations as were transport-associated occupations such as commercial driving and being a bus conductor.

Table 9. Percentages of participants who think that it is acceptable for men to engage in female occupations and also for women to engage in male occupations across the sites

Zone	Site	Acceptable for men to engage in female occupations		Acceptable for women to engage in male occupations	
		Percentage that said Yes		Percentage that said Yes	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
North	Urban	17.1	12.0	18.9	12.0
	Rural	0.0	13.9	3.4	15.2
East	Urban	39.1	40.0	43.2	37.4
	Rural	31.2	27.8	29.5	26.8
West	Urban	31.7	41.0	31.9	36.9
	Rural	22.9	26.0	21.9	31.2

Results in Table 9 shows that on the whole, low proportions of men and women at each site thought that it is acceptable for men to be engaged in female occupations. Higher levels of acceptance were observed in the urban than in the rural areas and among women more than men. Furthermore levels of acceptance of men engaging in female occupations were lowest in the northern sites. The reasons for not accepting that a man can do a woman's occupation were mainly similar across all six sites and across gender (see Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Reasons for the unacceptability of men in female occupations and women in male occupations.

Reasons for the unacceptability of men doing female occupations

- Our tradition or culture does not allow it; it is an abomination
- Religion (Islam) forbids it
- Leads to loss of dignity/honor/prestige for the man
- There is a clear demarcation between what a man can do and what a woman can do
- It is unnatural or contrary to nature
- The man must be lazy and/or stupid

Reasons for the unacceptability of women doing male occupations:

- Culture does not allow it/it is against tradition
- Religion (Islam) forbids it
- They do not have enough strength to do such occupations/men's occupations are too strenuous for women

- People will laugh at such a woman
- There is a clear demarcation between what a man can do and what a woman can do
- It is unnatural or contrary to nature

It was observed that only respondents from the northern sites indicated that religion forbids a man from engaging in a woman's occupation. This was not found in any of the other sites. Again, as with marriage patterns, religion seems to account largely for gender relations in the north while culture or tradition seems to have had more influence in the south. It was also observed that it is only in the eastern and western sites that a few people thought it was acceptable for a man to engage in women's occupations if he had no choice or if he was in great hardship. There are disincentives for engaging in female occupations in that such men are described with a number of uncomplimentary expressions: lazy, weak minded, useless, worthless, an incomplete man, homosexual (northern sites only), irresponsible, abnormal, sissy and impotent.

As with the acceptability of men doing female occupations, a higher proportion of respondents from the northern sites did not think that it was acceptable for women to engage in male occupations (see Table 9). Respondents from the eastern sites were more accepting of women engaging in male occupations. Occupations considered exclusively female include hairdressing, trading (including petty trading), palm oil production, cloth weaving, basket weaving and weeding farms. Gender-neutral occupations included any government job (civil service occupations), health care occupations (nursing, selling drugs and being physicians), teaching, trading, sewing clothes and farming. It appears that respondents were slightly more tolerant of women engaging in male occupations (as reflected in higher percentages of acceptability) than vice versa. With the exception of the eastern sites, men were more accepting of women in male occupations than women. Furthermore, participants in the urban area showed more positive attitudes.

The reasons given by respondents for not accepting a woman doing a man's occupation were also similar across sites (see Exhibit 1). As with the previous questions, it was only in the north that religion was cited as a reason. Generally, the reasons given center on women's physical capabilities relative to men's and culture. Such reasons may not stand strongly against the powerful factors such as necessity and high levels of competence brought about by education and training.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper examined the issues of patriarchy from the perspectives of female dependence/independence and male dominance by examining some aspects of marriage patterns, husband/wife relations, income generating activities, gender roles and gender attitudes among males and females from the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The findings generally show the contextual nature of female independence in terms of gender relations in family life. Literature has stressed that some

elements of traditional and cultural values provide opportunities for women to be independent even within patriarchal structures. Nnaemeka (1998), in her summary of the collection of chapters in her edited volume with differing views on Africa feminisms observed that:

> The volume underscores the power of African women to work with patriarchal/cultural structures that are liberating and ennobling while challenging those that are limiting and debilitating. It focuses on what African women are doing with/to patriarchal and cultural structures, and decenters but keeps in view the ever pervasive litany (particularly in Women's Studies) of what patriarchy is doing with/to African women.

This paper adopts this position in discussing our findings. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in the introduction, the findings pose challenges of interpretation. Indeed, many attempts to understand gender issues in African using an exclusively Western framework are usually counterproductive. Yet, our society is a transitional one with elements of tradition and culture coexisting with the realities of modernization and globalization. This therefore calls for a careful analysis that takes these elements into consideration. Before discussing the findings in light of the implications of gender and patriarchy, it is pertinent to note what many African feminists see as the areas of disagreement with Western writings of gender or feminist issues. Nnaemeka (1998) put this well by stating that:

> First, African feminism is not radical feminism. Second, resistance is directed towards feminism's stridency against motherhood. African feminism neither demotes/abandons motherhood nor dismisses maternal politics as non-feminist or unfeminist politics. Third, the language of feminist engagement in African (collaborate, negotiate, compromise) runs counter to the Western feminist scholarship and engagement (challenge, disrupt, deconstruct, blow apart, etc.) – African feminism challenges through negotiation and compromise. Fourth, there is resistance to western feminism's inordinate and unrelenting emphasis on sexuality...that conditions, for example, the nature, tone, spectacle and modus operandi of Western feminist insurgency against female circumcision in Africa and the Arab world.… Fifth, there are disagreements…over priorities.… Sixth, African feminism resists the exclusion of men from women's issues; on the contrary, it invites men as partners in problem solving and social change.… Finally, there is resistance to the universalization of Western notions and concepts. (pp. 6–8)

Our findings show some contexts of female independence and parity with men in terms of gender relations. These include their involvement in income generating activities. Nigerian women have traditionally been engaged in income generating activities either as independent farmers and traders or as part of the family business. This economic independence is very important from the standpoint of strengthening the power of women within the family in terms of decision making. It also contributes to psychological positive feelings about oneself. No doubt, if women's economic status can be enhanced through empowering policies that promote their income generating activities in the formal and informal sectors, gender related attitudes will improve. Furthermore, there is a strong association between women's economic status, independence and the quality of life and well being of the family.

In a recent study of the effect of a high-tech work environment on women's reproductive behavior, Udegbe and Bamgbose (2001) observed that due to the economic realities of living in Nigeria today, men do not want wives who would become a liability. It is becoming increasingly imperative to assist their wives in improving their economic independence for the betterment of the family. It was, however, stated that women should find a good balance in terms of the nature of the job and their roles as mothers. Related to this, are our findings in this study that women also perceive motherhood and maternal politics as sources of power. This is because motherhood is seen as the essence of womanhood with spiritual connotations and implications. Therefore, the findings lead us to reaffirm the centrality of motherhood and economic independence as two issues that need to be carefully resolved in defining women's power position in the family. Although largely political in its orientation and highly suspect in terms of motives, the Family Support Program established by the First Lady of the last but one military regime in Nigeria, is a recognition of this reality.

Our findings reflect ambivalence in that negative and positive attitudes were portrayed in the proverbs. It must be noted that many of the proverbs were not strictly cultural ones; some of them were direct translations from English or biblical sayings, thus reflecting some degree of external influence. Independence and favorable gender attitudes were stronger particularly in the East. This may not be unrelated to the fact that these were less centralized communities in pre-colonial times. Furthermore, differences between men and women in terms of power status in gender relations are marked in the North. Women in Northern Nigeria seem more inhibited than their counterparts from the West and East. Not surprisingly, reasons given for the unacceptability of men doing women's work and vice-versa are religion. Yet many feminists and Islamic scholars who make the point that Islam is not as restrictive as is being practiced have argued for improved enlightenment of Islamic injunction on the role of women. Governmental and non-governmental structures are also examining ways of improving opportunities and choices for women living under Muslim law.

In general, the global feminist agenda has had tremendous impact on structures and policies in many African countries. Nigeria in the past decade has established a commission for women, a ministry of social development and women's affairs and several programs that focus on women, but with shifting agendas depending on the interest of the government in power. There are numerous local and international non-governmental organizations and also research institutions that are pressured to work within the framework of the donors' interests and agendas. This constitutes one direct impact of globalization on gender issues in Africa. Apart from sensitizing the public to issues of gender, there is still a lot to be done. Many of the local institutions are not given a free hand to decide their agenda or work within frameworks that are perceived as unfeminist by the global feminist agenda. No doubt, we cannot

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4. Globalization and Family Patterns: A View from South Africa

Susan C. Ziehl

Introduction

Globalization has been the buzz-word in the social sciences since the 1990's. As in the case of most academic (and political) issues, it has been the subject of debate and controversy. There are differences of interpretation as to what this concept means, and even when different scholars agree on the meaning, they disagree as to whether it represents something 'really new'. But whereas globalization has been *the* issue of debate within the social sciences, and sociology in particular, it has had very little impact on the field of family studies. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Firstly, there has been a tendency for globalization to be conceptualized primarily in economic and political terms. It has been seen as synonymous (or at least principally about) the economic and political integration of societies across the globe and one of the debates has been about whether or not this has actually occurred. The family is seen as something different from the polity and economy – a different institution which raises different empirical and theoretical concerns. It is not unimportant that the family has traditionally been seen as representing the 'private realm' while the economy and polity are seen as constituting 'the public realms'. This is, of course, an ideological distinction which (family) sociologists have, for decades now, been questioning. But this has not changed the fact that there has been very little dialogue between scholars who have participated in the globalization debate and those interested in family studies.

It would be an oversimplification to suggest that the globalization debate(s) have been solely around economic and political issues. Notions of cultural imperialism, universal citizenship and the link between cultures and identity have also been part of the debate. But those who have taken this route have seldom made connections between that aspect of the globalization debate and family life. Or at least where that connection has been made, it has been mentioned rather than analysed in any degree of depth.

Another possible reason for the lack of dialogue between these areas of academic debate and enquiry, concerns the 'type' of scholars involved. The majority of those interested in broad global trends in economic and political affairs are male while family sociology is still predominantly a female preserve (numerically that is). This is not a hard and fast distinction. There are a number of male family sociologists and female economists. But on the whole, the gender divide between the various academic disciplines and sub-fields of sociology remain. For instance, at the last

ISA meeting in Montreal, about 70 per cent of the contributors to the Family Research Committee were female, almost exactly the same percentage as the proportion of male contributors to the Economy and Society Research Committee. In the case of the Ad Hoc Committee on Globalization, the proportion of male contributors was close to 90 per cent. What is the significance of this gender divide? I am not sure except to say that these sub-disciplines have attracted different kinds of people who, to date at least, have seldom conversed among themselves.

Again, there are of course exceptions such as Smith and Wallerstein's (1992) work on households and world systems theory. But to date their work has not been integrated into the field of family sociology. (See also Therborn 2001).

Although I have identified some reasons for the lack of dialogue – this is somewhat surprising since the issues which have been raised in the globalization debate overlap to a large extent with debates which have been taking place in family sociology. The communality is a concern with the question of change (extent thereof or lack thereof) and the direction of change: towards uniformity or diversity.

Globalization Debates

Drawing on Held (1999) Giddens (2001) describes the globalization debate in terms of three positions: hyperglobliziers; sceptics and transformationalists. Hyperglobalizers claim that we have indeed entered a new era (the 'global age') - driven by a global economic system (capitalism) into which all societies are integrated. Also associated with this view is the idea of global governance and a reduction in social inequality. Hyperglobalizers further claim that we are approximating a 'global civilization', that is, a common set of values and norms that govern the behaviour of individuals all over the globe (Giddens 2001:58–61).

On the other hand, the sceptics argue that the world economy is far less integrated today than was the case in the 19th century and that social inequality has been on the increase (at least when one compares the various regions of the world). It also affords the state greater power to decide how and if it wishes to be integrated into the world economy. In contrast to the hyperglobalisers, these theorists do not believe that we are moving towards greater cultural uniformity but rather a 'clash of civilizations' (Giddens 2001:58–61).

The third position (transformationalists) draws on elements to these two. Like the hyperglobalizers, they believe that we have entered a new era marked by an unprecedented rise in the degree of global interconnectedness. They see modernism as the force behind this transformation and are more open-ended/ambivalent about the consequences of this trend. They see both greater integration and fragmentation as features of the globe's future. This is the position adopted by Giddens who argues that the 'hypers' place too much emphasis on economic factors while the sceptics underestimate the extent to which the world order has changed. For him

globalization is not a one-way process but is more complex and open ended (Giddens 2001:61).

Giddens is one of the few sociologists to draw a connection between globalization and the family. He writes:

> Globalization is *fundamentally* changing the nature of our everyday experiences…*forcing* a redefinition of intimate and personal aspects of our lives, such as *the family*, gender roles, sexuality, personal identity.… We are faced with a move towards a new individualism (before which) the weight of tradition and established values is *retreating* [and that] traditional frameworks of identity are *dissolving* and new patterns of identity *emerging*. (Giddens 2001:61)

At first glance these passages seem to convey the hyperglobizers' position. The choice of words (like forcing; retreating; dissolving) gives the impression of globalization as a wave which is pushing us (all of us?) in a particular direction. But this is just an impression. Giddens differentiates his position from the 'hypers' by claiming that globalization is not a one-way process towards a particular end. What globalization is forcing us to do, claims Giddens, is to reconsider our identities in the light of greater knowledge of various cultures and the end product is a global citizen whose identity is formed by numerous cultural sources. To illustrate this idea he uses the example of "a black urban South African" who "today might continue to be strongly influenced by the traditions and cultural outlooks of his tribal roots at the same time as he adopts cosmopolitan styles and tastes – in dress, leisure pursuits, hobbies and so forth – that have been shaped by globalizing forces" (2001:64). What emerges from this passage is an image of someone being presented with a series of cultural repetoires and then choosing from among them to form a type of hybrid identity.

This does seem plausible even if a little patronizing to those who (still) live in traditional society. 'They' are seen as slaves to their culture, whereas 'we' modern people actively choose who we want to be and what our identity is. We can make and remake our identities and beliefs at will. But let us accept Giddens' portrayal of the 'global citizen' as one engaged in "the ongoing process of creating and re-creating our self-identities" (2001:62). The question that then arises is what those choices are. In other words, what is the outcome of those choices? Does any particular pattern emerge? Are we all making the same choices? (MacDonaldization) or different ones (greater cultural diversity). Is it only a matter of time before the "black urban South African" also sheds his/her belief in the anscestors and thereby "the cultural outlook of his (her) tribal roots"? But more pertinent to this paper is the question of how globalization is affecting family life.

In elaborating on his 'open-ended' (or what I call 'patchwork') view on globalization and family life, Giddens uses the example of the amount of time people spend with their families compared to the amount of time they spend at work. Drawing on Hochschild's research (1997), he points out that in Britain and the United States, employers have responded to the pressure of global competition by demanding that

their (professional) workers spend more time at work without extra pay – the economic rationale being higher productivity. This gives them less time to spend with their families. He explains this 'choice' as follows:

> Why would employees willingly agree to spend so much time at their jobs … when they are not paid to do so, when they know that such a commitment disrupts their family life, and in an age when computerization has greatly improved the workplace efficiency? … Hochschild's answer to this question is that some employers rely on the power of workplace norms to elicit a greater time commitment from their workers. New employees are socialized into a corporate culture in which working long hours is seen as a badge of dedication and professionalism. (2001:63)

In line with his open-ended approach, he furthermore points out that:

> … in France and Germany, by contrast, workers – sometimes working through their unions … have rejected corporate calls for a longer working week, and are instead pressuring employers to reduce the working week and to grant longer holidays. (2001:63)

There are three points I wish to make about this analysis of the impact of globalization on family life.

Firstly, what appears at first glance to be a choice, emerges (from the explanation) as not a choice at all. Rather it is a function of workplace culture. British and American workers slavishly following the culture of their organizations by putting work before family. On the other hand, French and German workers refuse to bow down to the demands (and therefore share the culture) of their corporate leaders by not compromising their family lives for the sake of work. Here we have two different outcomes but only one seems to be a choice.

Secondly, Hochschild's explanation is almost an exact duplication of Kanter's analysis as contained in her book "Men and Women of the Corporation" and which was published in 1977! Of course, Kanter does not use the word 'globalization'. What she does do though, is to draw a distinction between professional and non-professional workers and claims that the corporate pressure is primarily on the professionals (since they are exempt from labour laws regarding overtime pay). Against this background, it is possible that the distinction or difference Giddens is drawing between the U.S. and continental Europe, is actually a function of different labour relations regimes and the greater unionization of continental workers – rather than globalization as such.

But my final point is that this is a very schematic treatment of the impact of globalization on family life. Depending on where you live, your parents are either spending more or less time with you (as a result of globalization). In a chapter entitled "Families", Giddens once again mentions globalization (in the introductory comments). But nowhere in that chapter, is the connection between 'it' and family life fleshed out. It is *implicit* in his discussion of British families of South Asian origin but not elaborated on. We are told that South Asian children are exposed to "two very different cultures" and that "although there appear to be some signs of

change…– such as young people wanting a greater say in marriages… – on the whole the South Asian families continue to be remarkably strong" (2001:189). But nowhere is the connection between these observations and globalization made. The question of ethnic variation in family patterns links up with a crucial theme in family sociology – the notion of family diversity – which I discuss in more detail below.

Family Change and Diversity

A concern with changing family patterns is by no means new. It goes back to writers such as Bachofen (1861), Maine (1861), Morgan (1877), McLennan (1886), Le Play (1871) and Engels (1902) – all of whom identified various stages which they believed the family has gone through historically. The idea of an evolution in family patterns was echoed in Talcott Parsons' work – his central theoretical argument being that there is a fit between the nuclear family and a modern industrialized economy. This idea was taken further by William Goode (1963 and 1964) who argued in favour of a world-wide trend towards the nuclear family pattern as more and more societies industrialize (convergence thesis). However, in the 1960's and 1970's these ideas became increasingly unpopular as Laslett and the Cambridge group provided historical data in support of the view that in England at least, 'the family' has always been nuclear. So, if the modern family is nuclear and the pre-modern one was also nuclear, there can be no evolution or change of family patterns. But it was not long before other scholars took issue with Laslett and his colleagues claiming that 'the family' has indeed changed historically (Shorter 1975, Stone 1977, for example). According to these scholars, the modern family is significantly different from its pre-modern counterpart.

More recently, the notion of family diversity has emerged very strongly as a theme of family sociology. And once again this has been couched in terms of change: the most popular position being that there is an increasing trend away from the (conventional) nuclear family and towards 'family diversity' (divergence thesis). The question of whether or not and how family patterns have changed historically has therefore been a central concern of family sociology.

Against this background, I once again pose the question of why Family Sociologists have not engaged directly with the globalization debate. After all, that debate is also about change and the direction of change. Is the contemporary era sufficiently different from a previous one so that one can call the former 'a global village' and the latter by some other name (non-globalized)? Also, part of the globalization debate has been about the direction of change. Is the world becoming more standardized (macdonaldization thesis) or more diversified (cultural diversity)?

Since roughly the 1990's a 'hegemonic' position has emerged regarding the 'diversity debate'. It is one which says that in the course of the twentieth century there has been a steady move away from the conventional nuclear family and

towards other family forms. This process is seen as having progressed so far that there is today no standard model of the family or a majority family form. Divorce, increasing acceptance of 'alternative lifestyles' and growing ethnic diversity are seen as the major factors behind this development. This position is closely associated with the move towards redefining the family (away from the conventional nuclear family) and the substitution of terms like 'families' and 'family diversity' for 'the family'. This is a process which I myself have participated in - by defining the family as a social institution which encompasses a variety of cultural ideas (beliefs) about family life and a variety of family patterns (Ziehl 1997). It is also a process from which I have learned a great deal – my main conclusion being that the notion of family diversity as an empirical reality has been greatly exaggerated in certain instances. Below, I illustrate this idea using data from Great Britain. I then expand the discussion to include the European Union and later South Africa. My central argument will be that the notion of family diversity has more applicability on a continental/European and global level than a national one.

The 'Death' of the Conventional Nuclear Family?

The quote below aptly illustrates what has become the orthodoxy in family studies.

> Many Sociologists believe that we cannot speak about 'the family', as if there is one model of family life that is more or less universal. The dominance of the nuclear family was steadily eroded over the second half of the twentieth century.… Less than a quarter of households in Britain conform to the model of the traditional family. There are also pronounced differences in family patterns across ethnic minority groups.… For example, Asian households often contain more than one family with children, while black communities are characterized by a large number of lone-parent families. For these reasons it seems more appropriate to speak of 'families'. Referring to 'families' emphasizes the diversity of family forms. While as a shorthand term we may often speak of 'the family', it is vital to remember what a variety it covers. (Gidddens 2001:174)

Giddens goes on to reject functionalist theories of the family because they

> neglect variations in family forms that do not correspond to the model of the nuclear family. Families that did not conform to the white, suburban, middle-class 'ideal' were seen as deviant. (2001:175)

Evidence of this claim is usually sought in empirical data which show a move away from nuclear family households such as the data presented below.

It is from this table that Giddens derives the statement that today less than a quarter of households in Britain are nuclear families. But is this evidence of a decline in the nuclear family and if such evidence does exist, is the decline due to an increase in 'alternative lifestyle' choices or indeed greater ethnic diversity?

Table 1. Distribution of family and household types in Britain: 1961–1998

Household Type	1961	1971	1981	1991	1998
One Person Household	11	18	22	27	28
Couples (no children)	26	27	26	28	28
Couple with dependent children	38	35	31	25	23
Couple with non-dependent children	10	8	8	8	7
(Nuclear Family Pattern)	(85%)	(88%)	(87%)	(88%)	(86%)
Lone Parents Dependent children	2	3	5	6	7
Lone Parents Non-dependent children	4	4	4	4	3
Multi-family households	3	1	1	1	1
Two or more unrelated adults	5	4	5	3	3

Dependent children include all children up to the age of 15 plus all those persons aged 16-24 who are economically inactive (mainly in education) and who are living with at least one of their parents (European Commission 2001:115).

Source: Guardian, 27 March 2000, p.3, in Giddens 2001:176.

Evidence of the Decline?

Focusing on the nuclear family household alone is not in itself evidence of the decline in the nuclear family over time. Even the claim that the nuclear family household represents a minority of all households is not evidence that it does not 'predominate' (if that is meant in the statistical sense). As one can notice from the table above, even in the 1960's only a minority of households were nuclear family households (38 per cent if one only includes those with dependent children and 48 per cent if non-dependent children are included as well).

What one needs to focus on, in determining any change in the (statistical) predominance of the nuclear family *pattern,* are the various *other household structures* that make up the 'normal' nuclear family *domestic life cycle*. These are couple households (before the birth of children and after they have left home) and the single person household (when one spouse has died and sometimes before marriage). When one adds together these three phases of the nuclear family domestic life cycle, one notices that 85 per cent of households were in one of those phases in 1960 compared with 86 per cent in 1998. This means that the proportion of households, which fall into one of the phases of the 'normal' nuclear family domestic life cycle, has either remained stable or indeed increased.

Looked at from this perspective then, there is hardly any evidence of a massive decline in the popularity of the conventional nuclear family model. This is not to say that there has been no change over the roughly 40 year period depicted in the table. If one focuses on single parent families with dependent children one notices that they have increased from 2 per cent of households in 1961 to 7 per cent of households in 1998. One can, of course, present these statistics more dramatically by saying that single parent families are three times more common today than was the case

in 1961 or have experienced a 300 per cent increase etc. However, they still represent a small proportion of all households despite the dramatic rise in the divorce rate.

But let us return to the argument that nuclear family households (couples with dependent children) have declined and focus on the reasons for this. The unprecedented rise in the divorce rate is undoubtedly one of the reasons. It manifests itself in both the increase in single parent households and single person households. But the other reasons are predominantly demographic. Couples are marrying later today than was the case in the 1950's. But the majority of the population still marries at some stage in their lives. This means that the number of couple households (before the birth of children) increases. The other major demographic trend which has impacted on household patterns is the increase in longevity. On average, people are living much longer today than was the case in the past. This increases the proportion of couple households (after children have left home) and single person households (when one spouse dies). Indeed, probably the most dramatic change in household composition patterns we have seen in the course of this century, has been the increase in single person households. And this is mainly because people are living longer and to a lesser extent because they are waiting longer before marrying.

Even the extent of non-marital child-bearing (in Britain) has been exaggerated. Data on this phenomenon is usually presented in the form of the number of non-marital births as a proportion of all births. For example, in the United Kingdom births outside marriage increased from about 5 per cent in 1960 to 30 per cent in 1991 (Elliot 1996:23). But this is at least partially explained by a decline in marital child-bearing over that period. In other words it is not only that the numerator (non-marital childbearing) has increased but also because the denominator (all children born) has decreased that the increase in births to unmarried couples appears so dramatic.[1]

How Has Increased Ethnic Diversity in Britain Impacted on Family Patterns?

It is in this area that I believe the closest connection between globalization and family patterns can be made. As is probably well known, since the Second World War there has been massive immigration of people from the former colonies into Britain and Western Europe as a whole. In the case of Britain these migrants came mainly from Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. Elliot writes the following in this connection:

> Over the past forty years, ethnic divisions have assumed heightened salience in national and international politics.… These divisions involve cultural differences and allegiances, are in general associated with marked inequalities of power and wealth and tend to be at their sharpest wherever they coincide with racial and/or religious distinctions. *At their centre lie differences in gender and family structures.* Gender and family patterns may reflect longstanding cultural tra-

1. A better methodology may be to place the number of non-marital and marital births in relation to all women aged 15–49.

> ditions, are frequently governed by deeply held religious beliefs and are integral to a people's identity. However, they are inevitably challenged, and become the source of intense anxieties, wherever ethnic groups share a common territory and must negotiate a shared way of life. (1996:40; emphasis added)

As a South African I find this new discourse on race, ethnicity and family patterns quite curious since these have been issues which academics and political analysts in South Africa have been grappling with for a very long time. How does one deal with cultural diversity? Does one force or encourage everyone to become the same and does that sameness mean more Westernized on the grounds that this culture is somehow better than others because it is associated with better technology and higher degrees of economic development? This is the assimilation and cultural imperialist option. Or does one respect or even value 'otherness' and therefore encourage cultural diversity – the cultural pluralist option. I also find the use of the words non-white (Giddens 2001:188) and non-European (Elliot 1996:43) somewhat jarring. They have long been abandoned in South Africa[1]. But let me return to the main issue here. How has increasing cultural diversity in the case of Britain impacted on family patterns in that society?

Elliot discusses this issue with respect to the two main immigrant groups: Britons of Afro-Caribbean descent and those of Asian descent. In both cases she draws on research which compares the 'ideal typical' working class family pattern in the Caribbean and rural South Asia in the 1950's and 1960's with the family patterns which characterize the working class section of these communities in Britain today.

While Elliot's depiction of working class family life in the Caribbean in the 1950's and 60's is somewhat confusing it seems to involve the following: relatively high rates of extended and female-headed families and non-marriage. Migration to Britain seems to have involved an initial increase in the popularity of marriage followed by a decline. It also seems to have involved the 'virtual disappearance' of both the 'grandmother family' and extended families more generally (1996:45). This assertion is based on research which shows that only 1 per cent of children (of Afro-Caribbean descent) are raised by grandmothers today (Griffiths 1983, in Elliot 1996:45). Data on marital status by ethnic group further shows that in the period 1986-8 the Afro-Caribbean population was less likely to be married than 'White' Britons (33 per cent vs 51 per cent) and more likely to be divorced (7 per cent vs 4 per cent) (Elliot 1996:45). Solo parenthood is also shown to be more common among Afro-Caribbeans than 'native Britons'. According to Haskey (Elliott 1996), in 1987-9 about half of all families with dependent children in the Afro-Caribbean

1. In official government documentation in South Africa, the terms Black/African; Coloured; Indian/Asian and White are used. It is also common practice to use the concepts white and black where the latter is taken to mean Africans, Asians and Coloureds. The term 'coloured' is sometime placed between quotation marks since it is less often a self-applied label than the others. It is therefore the most controversial of them all.

community were headed by a lone parent compared with only 15 per cent in the case of 'White' Britons. In Elliot's view, what these data show is both change and continuity in Afro-Caribbean family life as a result of migration. She summarises her views as follows:

> [The data] show that in Afro-Caribbean communities, extended family relationships are weaker than they were in the Caribbean, that the grandmother family is virtually non-existent and that there may be tendencies towards higher rates of marriage.…. Nevertheless, Afro-Caribbean family patterns remain distinctive in terms of the institutional weakness of marriage, the presence of woman-headed families (and) the marginality of men... .(Elliot 1996:57)

She finds similar degrees of change and continuity in Asian family patterns. But in this case the nature of rural South Asian families of the fifties is more clearly spelt out. As far as household structure is concerned "the ideal typical rural South Asian family was characterised by the formation of three-generation patrilocal households (consisting of a man, his sons and grandsons, their wives and unmarried daughters) …" (Ballard 1982, in Elliot 1996:49).

> Ballard shows that the prototypical rural Asian family is constructed around an ideology of patrilineal cooperation. This 'traditional Asian family' is frequently cited as epitomizing the classical extended family believed to be characteristic of subsistence societies. It stands in sharp contrast with the conventional Western conjugal family and in even sharper contrast with 'liberated' Western sexual and family values.(1996:49)

How has migration impacted on Asian family life? Elliot claims that all the available evidence indicates that migration to Britain resulted in the severe disruption of kinship ties but that these have subsequently been reconstituted:

> … the salience of kinship bonds in Asian culture represented an important resource in the reworking of Asian life in Britain … though preferences for nuclear-family households are emerging (Stopes-Roe and Cochrane 1990) Asian households remain larger and are more likely to contain extended family members than either 'white' British or British Afro-Caribbean households. (Haskey 1989b, Ballard and Kalra 1994; Elliot 1996:51)

Elliot finds further evidence of the "continuing integrity of Asian family values" in the

> low rates of unmarried cohabitation, divorce and solo parenthood among Asian peoples … together with their low rate of inter-marriage with people of other ethnicities. (Elliot 1996:57)

It would seem then that British citizens of South Asian descent are adding more conservatism to British family life while at the same time creating more diversity by having a greater propensity to extended family living, than other Britons. On the other hand, Britians of Afro-Caribbean descent are adding to the array of more 'liberal' family structures by showing a greater propensity to 'lone parent families'.

> In sum, it appears that the gender and family structures of Afro-Caribbean and Asian groups have changed in the context of the cultural, economic and political opportunities and constraints of life in Britain but in ways that are shaped by their own cultural logic. They remain

> distinctively different from Anglo-Saxon gender and family structures. The gender and family structures of other ethnic minority groups (including European minority groups) can also be expected to display their own cultural specificities. Afro-Caribbean and Asian patterns are thus indicative of the ethnic diversification of British society in the latter part of the twentieth century. (Elliot 1996:58)

While I would agree with Elliot that British society has undoubtedly undergone a process of ethnic diversification, the question I would like to address is the extent to which this has impacted on family patterns in British *society as a whole*. If one looks back at Table 1, one notices that since the 1960's the proportion of all households that are sole parent households has increased (from 2 to 7 per cent or 6 to 10 per cent if independent children are included) but that 'multi-family households' have declined to almost nothing (3 per cent to 1 per cent). The short answer to the question on the extent to which ethnic diversification has translated into greater family diversity is therefore 'not much' and the explanation lies in a phrase contained in the quote from Elliot above – 'minority groups'. Immigrants from outside Europe and their descendants, today constitute only about 5 per cent of the British population – a figure that is expected to stabilize at around 9 per cent (Elliot 1996). Their 'distinctive' family patterns are therefore unlikely to impact greatly on the general pattern of family life in that society. It is not just the case that the vast majority of households in Britain fall within one of the phases of the 'normal' nuclear family domestic life cycle (Table 1) but also that the *majority of the population* find themselves in that situation as well. This is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Households and people in Great Britain 1981 and 1992

Type of household	% of households 1981	% of people 1981	% of people 1992
One Person	22	8	11.1
Married Couple	26	20	23.4
Nuclear Family Dependent children	32	49	39.9
Nuclear Family Independent children	8	10	10.9
Nuclear Family Pattern	88%	87%	85.3%
Lone Parent Dependent children	4	5	10.1
Other	9	8	4.6

Source: Adapted from Social Trends 13 & 24 in Haralambos and Holborn (1995:355).

The argument being raised above is not that no change has occurred in the field of family patterns over the last 50 years. Rather, it is that the extent of the change is not as dramatic as family sociologists (and the media) have led us to believe. *Despite* a significant increase in the divorce rate; *despite* increasing acceptance of cohabitation as a prelude or alternative to marriage and *despite* increasing acceptance of non-mar-

ital childbearing and *despite* increasing ethnic diversity, the vast majority of households and people in Britain fall within the nuclear family pattern.

Making the Facts Fit the Ideology: Statistical vs Moral Norms

How have we got to this point where, what sociologists and the media have been telling us about family life, is at variance with the empirical data? I submit that it is because family sociologists in particular have failed to adequately distinguish between moral and statistical norms. But more than that, it is because family sociologists have been trying to seek support for their view that non-conventional family structures *ought* to be accepted as legitimate or 'normal' (a moral stance), in empirical data showing how common or uncommon different household structures are (statistical frequencies). Note Giddens' rejection of functionalist theories of the family because they imply that middle class families are 'ideal' and others are deviant (page 6). Note also the phrase "the dominance of the nuclear family (has been) steadily eroded" without specification of what kind of dominance is at issue (Giddens 2001:175).

Put bluntly, the reasoning has been as follows: if the conventional nuclear family is no longer the statistical norm, then it should no longer be regarded as the moral norm and other family situations should enjoy legitimacy as well. The problem with this reasoning is that it is an attempt to deduce a moral position from an empirical claim about how frequently something occurs. Even if it were possible to show that the majority of a population does not follow the conventional nuclear family pattern, that is not evidence for the claim that it should lose its position as the moral norm or as legitimate.

Conversely, just because non-conventional family structures represent a small proportion of all households is not, in itself, proof for the claim that they *should* be regarded as legitimate or accepted by the public at large. One cannot deduce a 'should' claim from an 'is' claim. The legitimacy or not of any particular family or household structure is a moral question that can only be answered on that level. It may well be the case that within family sociology circles at least (and in the media), the nuclear family no longer enjoys the position of moral norm and other family situations are regarded as legitimate. But the empirical evidence shows that it is still the statistical norm.

This raises the question of what we mean by (family) diversity. Is it sufficient for 50, 20 or even 10 per cent of the population to be 'different' before we talk of diversity? It would appear that if the 1990's was the decade of deconstructing the concept of 'the family' it is now time for us to start deconstructing the notion of 'family diversity'. The argument raised above is that if 50 per cent is the cut-off point (half conventional and half non-conventional) or even 20 per cent, then there is not much family diversity in Britain today. The same applies to the United States. The

argument that will be raised below is that the notion of family diversity has greater applicability on a regional scale (when we look at Europe as a whole) and globally.

Family Diversity in the European Context

When "Household and Family in Past Times" was first published (Laslett and Wall 1972), it was heralded as providing conclusive proof for the claim that in pre-industrial Europe the nuclear family pattern already predominated. This was however, a simplification and distortion of the research, since as Kertzer (1991) points out, the book does contain chapters on Serbia and France which show significant regional variation in family patterns in pre-industrial times – the main difference being the proportion of 'extra-nuclear kin' in households. Kertzer (1991) furthermore cites research conducted on communities in Southern Europe (Italy) and Eastern Europe (Hungary) which also show higher levels of extended family households in those areas than in the case of North-Western Europe and England, in particular. Laslett himself has responded to the 'undue haste' with which people have generalized from data pertaining to England to the rest of Europe by drawing a distinction between four "tendencies in domestic group organization in traditional Europe" (in Wall, Robin and Laslett 1983:256). He labels these North-West, Central, Mediterean and East. He presents these as points on a continuum with the North-West areas having the lowest proportion of 'resident kin' and multigenerational households and Eastern Europe having the highest. This classification is very similar to Hanjal's distinction between two pre-industrial marriage systems in Europe: the North-Western pattern or simple household system and the South-East or 'joint family household system' – the latter being marked by a younger age at marriage, patrilocal post-marriage residence and therefore higher incidence of complex family households than in the case of the North-West pattern (in Kertzer 1991:158). The question I would like to address in this section is whether these differences still persist today.

The European Commission has provided data on the distribution of the population between households in the European Union in 1988 and 1999. The data for 1999 are presented in Tables 3 and 4. Note that the unit of analysis in this instance is the individual rather than the household. The first column of Table 3 therefore shows that 12 per cent of the EU population was living alone; 24 per cent with a partner; 36 per cent with a partner and dependent children. Table 3 further shows that 11 per cent of the European population was living in households consisting of 3 or more adults with dependent children. I am taking these to be extended family households. Is this distribution of household structures the same for each country within the Union or do distinct patterns emerge which can be linked to the distinction between the nuclear family pattern and the extended family pattern? The answer to the second part of this question is 'yes'. This is illustrated below.

Elsewhere, I have argued that the barometer or test of the prevalence of one or other of these family *patterns* is not the prevalence of nuclear family *households* or the extended family *households* themselves (Ziehl 2001). Rather, when looking for evidence of one of these family systems, one needs to focus on what is rare or unusual in that family system. In the case of the nuclear family system it is extended family households that are rare. In this system, it is unusual for a married couple to live with one or other of their parents or for a child to be raised in a household which also contains a grandparent. In the case of the extended family system, it is single person households and couple households that are unusual. In the extended family system it is rare for someone to live alone either before marriage or once a spouse has died or to live with a spouse only. This is because extended family systems are governed by the rule of patrilocality (rather than neolocality) – a man brings his wife into his parental home. The extended family system also includes nuclear family households since not all sons can be accommodated in this way.

In Table 3 only those countries with below average proportions of their population living in single person households are included. They have further been arranged from lowest to highest (proportions of the population living alone). The countries included in Table 3 are also those with above average levels of extended family living.

Table 3. Countries with above average levels of extended family households

Type of household	EU *	Spain	Portugal	Ireland	Greece	Italy	Luxem.	Total
Single Person	12	5	5	7	8	9	10	7
Couple Household	24	16	16	14	21	18	20	18
Nuclear Family Household	36	34	39	43	38	37	43	39
Single Parent Household	4	2	2	4	2	2	4	3
Extended Family Household	11	21	20	18	13	13	12	16
Three or more adults	14	22	18	14	18	21	12	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* No data for Sweden.

Source: European Commission, 2001:115.

Table 3 shows that in these societies (which with only two exceptions, are located in Southern Europe), it is unusual for people to live alone. Living with a spouse only is also less common in these countries than in the European Union as a whole. Finally, in all these countries, the proportion of the population living in extended family households is well above the average for Europe. Indeed, in Spain, Portugal and Ireland they are almost twice as common than is the case in Europe as a whole. These differences are even starker if we compare these (mainly) southern countries with those further north. Table 4 shows those countries which have above average levels

of single person households and below average levels of extended family households.

Table 4. Countries with above average levels of single person households

Type of household	EU*	Den.	Ger.	Fin	Neth.	U.K.	France	Belgium	Aust.	Total
Single Person	12	17	16	16	14	13	13	12	12	14
Couple Household	24	28	29	26	29	27	25	23	22	26
Nuclear Family Household	36	36	34	41	35	33	43	42	33	37
Single Parent Household	4	3	4	6	3	8	5	5	3	5
Extended Family Household	11	7	7	4	9	8	7	8	14	8
Three or more adults	14	8	10	6	9	12	8	11	15	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Data for Sweden not available.

Source: European Commission, 2001:115.

As can be noted from Table 4, all of these countries are in the northern or central parts of Europe. Comparing these two regional blocks gives clear evidence of family diversity within Europe itself (Table 5).

Table 5. Regional variation in family patterns in European Union 1999

Type of household	European Union	"Southern" Europe	Northern & Central Europe
Single Person	12	7	14
Couple Household	24	18	26
Nuclear Family Household	36	39	37
Single Parent Household	4	3	5
Extended Family Household	11	16	8
Three or more adults	14	18	10
Total	100	100	100
Nuclear Family Pattern	*(72)*	*(64)*	*(77)*
Extended Family Pattern	*(47)*	*(55)*	*(45)*

Source: European Commission, 2001:115.

The classical extended family pattern is associated with only two household types: the extended and nuclear family. Ego, her child/ren and grandchild/ren, plus son's wife. This becomes a nuclear family when ego dies and stays such until a grandchild starts having children. When one adds together these two phases of the extended family pattern one notices that a minority of people in Northern and Central Europe (45 per cent) but a majority of those in 'Southern' Europe (55 per cent), fall into one of those phases. It is true that the majority of people in Southern Europe fall within the nuclear family domestic life cycle (64 per cent) as well. But this hides

the fact that living in extended family households is twice as common in the 'South' as compared to the North.

Spain and Denmark are at opposite poles of the nuclear vs extended family pattern divide. Extended family living is three times *more common* and single person living is three times *less common* in Spain than Denmark. Closer examination reveals that in Spain there are no people aged 30 or below who are living alone. This compares with 24 per cent of the Danish population (Table 6). Furthermore, when one focuses on the 65+ age category one notices that 18 per cent of the Spanish population in that age category are living in a household arrangement other than alone or with a spouse compared to only 2 per cent in the case of Denmark. It is my understanding that these 'other households' are extended families. Among the elderly, living in an institution is also more than twice as common in Denmark than Spain (5 per cent vs 2 per cent) (Table 7).

Table 6. Countries with above average levels of extended family households

	EU		Dennmark		Spain	
	% People	% SPHH	% People	% SPHH	% People	% SPHH
All	12*	100*	17*	100*	5*	100*
-30	2	16.7	4	23.5	0	0
30–64	5	41.7	7	41.1	2**	40
65+	5	41.7	7	41.1	3	60

SPHH: Single Person Households
* May not add up to the total due to rounding.
** I have corrected this from 1 since the breakdown by sex shows 1 per cent of males and 1 per cent of females aged 30-64 living alone.
Source: European Commission, 2001:115.

Table 7. Elderly population by household and age group, 2001

Population 65+ living:	European Union %	Denmark %	Spain %
Alone	32	35	22
With Partner	54	56	58
Other Household	9	5	18
Institution	4	3	2
Total	100	100	100

Source: European Commission, 2001:116.

The argument raised above is that globalization has had very little impact on family patterns in Great Britain. Longitudinal data for the European Union suggests that this is the case for Europe as a whole as well. Indeed between 1988 and 1999 the proportion of the European population living in one of the phases of the nuclear family pattern has increased (from 69 to 72 per cent) (Table 8). But my second argument is that while one finds little family diversity when focusing on one country or one continent, this is not true when we compare different countries and regions.

The data shows that while living alone and living with a spouse only, is not completely unheard-of in 'Southern' European countries, there is evidence to suggest that a different family pattern or domestic life cycle is being followed in the 'South' as compared to the northern parts of Europe. In this paper it is not possible to delve into the reasons for those differences. The argument that will be raised below is that the notion of family diversity has even more applicability on a global scale.

Table 8. Population in households in European Union, 1988 and 1999

Household type	1988	1999
Single Person	10	12
Couple Household	21	24
Nuclear Family Household Dependent Children	38	36
Single Parent Household	3	4
Extended Family Household	14	11
Three or more adults	14	14
Total	100	100
Nuclear Family Pattern	*(69)*	*(72)*
Extended Family Pattern	*(52)*	*(47)*

Source: European Commission, 2001:115.

Towards a Global Perspective on Family Diversity

In the 1960's, William Goode put forward the idea (with qualification) of a global movement towards uniformity in family patterns and claimed that the convergence was towards the nuclear family pattern (1963,1964).

> In all parts of the world and for the first time in world history, all social systems are moving fast or slowly toward some form of the conjugal family system and also toward industrialization … with industrialization the traditional family systems – usually extended or joint family systems … are breaking down.(Goode 1964:176)

I am not aware of any research that has been done on a global scale to test this hypothesis and therefore to determine whether Goode's prediction has in fact come true. In the South African context numerous studies have been undertaken to determine whether Black South Africans are increasingly living in nuclear family households (see Ziehl 2001). This research is based on the fact that African family systems are different from Western family systems – the first being based on the extended family and the second on the nuclear family model. The question that has been addressed is therefore whether or not Black South Africans are increasingly adopting the family patterns characteristic of Western societies. Some have argued that it is politically incorrect to ask this question (Russell 1994). Indeed, in elaborating her views on this matter, Russell specifically refers to the process of globalization claim-

ing that despite this process, the kinship systems of Black South Africans are likely to remain strong:

> [There is] compelling evidence ... of the persistence among black metropolitan households of distinctive patrilineal householding principles, which prove resilient and compatible with industrial urbanisation. It alerts us to the probability that as Africa becomes more firmly entwined in the world economy, distinctively African social patterns are likely to emerge and persist. In South Africa they are likely to predominate and prevail. (1994:66)

Elsewhere, I have argued that the problem with this debate is that we have not had the data on which to base claims about changing family patterns in *South African society as a whole* (Ziehl 2001). The studies referred to earlier have all been either small-scale or lacked a longitudinal dimension or both. In the 1990's Steyn (1995) conducted a survey of household structures in South Africa using a representative sample. However, she only included the urban areas and her study was not longitudinal. I have analysed data from the 1996 South African census to determine the distribution of household types in South Africa as a whole. At the time of writing this process is incomplete since only the data for Black and White South Africans have been analysed. But since Black South Africans represent the vast majority of all South Africans (77 per cent), I will be using data from that section of the population, as a proxy for South African society as a whole. Below, I address two questions: (1) Are South Africans increasingly following the nuclear family pattern and (2) Are there distinct differences between the family patterns of South Africans and those of Western societies such as Britain?

Convergence or Divergence

It is not possible to compare the 1996 Census with the previous one (1991) for two reasons. Although, the 1991 census questionnaire included a question on household structure, the responses were not coded and the data not analysed. Secondly, the 1991 census excluded the former homeland areas whereas the 1996 one did not. This means that the geographic base of the two censuses differs. Longitudinal data, to measure change in family patterns in South African society as a whole, are therefore not available. The next best option is to compare the distribution of household structures in urban and non-urban areas. This is done in Table 9. Given that Black South Africans have traditionally followed the extended family pattern, one is immediately struck by the high levels of single person households in both urban and non-urban areas. This is accounted for by the fact that in 1996, domestic workers who live on the property of their employers were classified as heading their own households. This is not an unimportant finding though, since working and living in the household of a non-family member is very much part of the traditional English family pattern. More solid evidence of changing family patterns can be found in the 'couple household' category. In the past and still today, it is very unusual for Black South Africans to live with a spouse only. Only 7 per cent of all Black households

were couple households in 1996. However, the urban figure is significantly higher than the non-urban one. Urban dwellers are twice as likely to live with a spouse only, than rural dwellers. Here, then, there is some evidence of the breaking up of the extended family pattern and the adoption of the nuclear family pattern associated with urbanization. I am relying here on only one data-source though and South African census data (like those of other societies) are fraught with problems. So I offer this observation as a tentative null hypothesis while we await better research on family life in South Africa.

Table 9. Household structure, South African Census 1996, Blacks urban /rural

	Black		
Type of Household	**Urban (%)**	**Non-Urban (%)**	**Total (%)**
Single Person	20.69	13.41	17
Couple Household	9.80	4.59	7
Nuclear Family Household	22.02	17.58	20
Single Parent Household	11.31	17.61	15
Extended Family Household	22.57	29.59	27
Three or more unrelated adults	2.45	1.76	2
Unspecified	11.09	15.45	13
Missing value	0.07	0.02	
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Own calculations from data provided by Statistics S.A.

South Africa and Britain

The idea that South Africans may increasingly be adopting the nuclear family model in no way contradicts the view that *on the whole* South Africans *do not* follow the nuclear family pattern. As can be noted from the table below, only a minority of households (44 per cent) fall within the nuclear family pattern. Moreover, a comparison with Britain shows that whereas in the latter case, the nuclear family pattern in clearly the statistical norm (accounting for 86 per cent of all households), this is not the case in South Africa. Finally, whereas only 1 per cent of households in Britain are extended, this applies to 27 per cent of all South African households. In my view, then, the table below aptly illustrates the notion of family diversity on a regional or global level.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to draw links between debates around globalization and those that have been taking place within the field of family studies. In both cases there has been dispute about whether the contemporary era is sufficiently different from the previous ones, or not. Among those who believe that we have in fact entered a new and different era, there is disagreement about whether that

means that identities and behavioural patterns (including family patterns) have become more uniform (and westernized) or more diversified.

Table 10. Population in households in European Union, 1988 and 1999

Household Type	Great Britain 1988	South Africa 1996
Single Person	28	17
Couple Household	28	7
Nuclear Family Household	30	20
Nuclear Family Pattern	*(86%)*	*(44%)*
Single Parent Household	10	15
Extended Family Household	1	27
Three or more adults/ unrelated individuals	3	2
Not Specified		13

Source: European Commission, 2001:115.

The reigning orthodoxy in family studies is one which says that in England and Western Europe, the nuclear family pattern did once predominate but that it has lost that position due to increasing rates of divorce and increasing ethnic diversification. There are connections here with the globalization phenomenon since the post Second World War migration from parts of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean is identified as one of the main reasons for the increased ethnic diversity in countries like Britain. Without disputing that *some* change has occurred (in the field of family patterns), I have critiqued the notion that it has been so great that the nuclear family has been knocked off its statistical perch – at least in the case of individual societies within North Western Europe. Seeing the nuclear family *household* as a phase in the domestic life cycle, which makes up the nuclear family *pattern*, makes this clear.

With regard to the divergence/convergence debate I have argued that on the societal level and in the case of Western European societies such as Britain, there is very little evidence of family diversity despite the migration flows of the post Second World War era. I have further argued that on the continental level the division between north and south, which was identified by family historians for the pre-industrial era, seems to be persisting. In the 'south' family life is far more likely to involve a period of extended family living than is the case in the 'north'. The notion of family diversity is therefore more applicable in this context (but the connections with globalization unclear). Finally, I have argued that when one compares a Western society such as Britain with an African society such as South Africa, one notices significant differences in family patterns. Family diversity therefore also applies in this context. Whether globalization will eventually eradicate those differences and African culture succumb to its pressures, remains to be seen.

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make significant impact unless we define and clarify our agenda in terms of the future of gender issues, because of the potential impact on the family in Africa and in Nigeria in particular. We need to be proactive rather than reactive in our approach, through examining our historical past, environment our limitations and obstacles. Literature has documented some aspects of Nigerian (e.g., Yoruba, Igbo) traditional gender ideology such as the dual-sex institutions of shared authority and power. Some writers have also asserted that the erosion of women's power was a result of the intrusion of foreign systems with different gender orientation and new power structures (Okonjo 1976, Jell-Bahlsen 1998). Obviously, this influence of global feminism on Africa may potentially impact negatively if not negotiated with caution.

Is it dysfunctional to acknowledge gender differences? Some African feminists have argued that sexual differences and similarities, as well as sex roles enhance sexual autonomy and cooperation between women and men, rather than promote polarization and fragmentation. How then should we handle gender differences? The appreciation of differences should be such that it implies complimentary, mutual respect and shared authority, as encouraged by our traditions and culture. It therefore gives us the impetus to evoke the power and independence of African women, account for successes amidst obstacles with a view to removing the impediments from our cultural baggage and modern influences.

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